

## Trapped – Chapter 1

If there's one thing I will always remember, it's how expensive a divorce can be. We were married for four years and the slick lawyer she hired tried to clean me out. I asked around and found another as slick as hers. We didn't have children, a blessing, and my lawyer said it's probably what saved me. It was my first marriage, her second, and after you've been through one divorce, you know the way the game is played.

We settled on her getting half of whatever I'd earned during the four years, plus my paying all of the legal fees. Her income for that four year period didn't seem to enter the picture. The ironic part of that was she'd banked every penny, but I didn't know that. I owned a construction company and worked long hours, all year long. When I'd occasionally call home and the phone wasn't answered, I'd assumed she was out and about shopping, not working. At least, when I'd asked, that's what she always claimed.

Then she'd fallen for her boss at work, himself recently divorced. One thing led to another and she changed from a gold digger to a two timing gold digger. I feel sorry for that sucker, by the time she's through with him, all he'll have are the clothes on his back. I'd been accumulating money in my business to buy some new equipment and was able to pay off the gold digger and the lawyers even if it meant waiting a year to get the new equipment.

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I had my little secret too, something I'd been working on to surprise her. When I'd seen the rising price of gas and the direction the economy was tanking, I sat down and gave it some long thought. Gold was up to over \$400 an ounce and silver moved with it. I took some of the set aside money and bought Krugerrands and junk silver coins. I'd taken time to talk to a realtor and had him looking for some land meeting very strict criteria. I wanted at least a half-section, with good water and buildings. I had in mind an old farm perhaps, for sale by someone who retired and moved away.

He found the farm I wanted, for \$2,000 an acre. My banker and I had a long talk about that and if I'd come up with \$128,000 (20%) down, he'd carry the rest, assuming the property was in the name of the business. I jumped on it in a heartbeat and told him which account to take the down payment from. Hold on here, I didn't say I was broke, more like bent.

After the divorce, I sold our house, which was paid for, and set the funds aside for things I couldn't run through the business. I had two of my men go out to the property and make any repairs it needed. Then, I hired our usual paint contractor and had all the buildings painted. These expenses somehow managed to get run through the business, but hey, it's a proprietorship. I had opened a job file on the project.

The farm had a good well and a windmill to lift the water, solving one problem. I had a septic company clean out the septic system, another business expense. It was also

connected to the electrical grid, which caused me some concern. I reviewed the records of the power consumed on the farm when it was active to get a starting point. We installed a Kohler 50REOZJB diesel generator with a 200-amp automatic transfer switch.

The literature said the generator used between 1.6 to 4.0gph. According to my math, it would require over 35,000-gallons to run for a year. We had an installation at a truck stop some time back and had installed two 30,000-gallon diesel tanks. I pulled the job file and found the name of the tank manufacturer. I ordered two of their largest tanks, 40,000 gallons, and sent a crew out to excavate a large hole for those two tanks. Then, I got on the phone and tried to find diesel fuel cheap.

The tanks were installed and ready go before I found a supplier. He and I worked a deal, if I'd install a gasoline tank at my place of business and give him a 5-year exclusive supply contract, he'd fill my two tanks with diesel for pennies per gallon over his cost. He recommended I buy at several 55-gallon drums of PRI-D and a supply of PRI-G. He said each tank needed 20-gallons of PRI-D. He went on to say that I should add PRI-D every year.

The costs were rising on this job. I took some of the money that was left from selling the house and paid for the diesel fuel, there was no way to run 80,000-gallons of fuel through on the job. For those rare occasions where I found time to hunt, I had a Winchester Model 70 in .30-06, a Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun and a Taurus M62R clone of the Winchester model 62 .22-caliber rifle. I had a small amount of ammo, most of which was .22.

I had a friend I met through the Chamber of Commerce who operated a gun store and I called him and told him I was interested in a rifle or three. He sort of sounded like Bob Barker when he said, "Come on down." I told him I'd see him on Saturday and gave him an idea of what I had in mind.

"Paul, have you decided what you want yet?"

"Bob, I want a .30 caliber rifle, semi-auto; I checked Mossberg and they have that model 590 with ghost ring sights and I suppose I'll need a handgun."

"Is money an object or not?"

"Well... I don't want to spend all my money in one place for a couple of fancy guns."

"A company named Springfield Armory in Geneseo, Illinois makes a semi-auto clone of the M14 rifle. They have various grades but if you want to spend the money on it, I think their Super Match is the overall best rifle. The thing is, it's pricey, running from shade over \$2,800 up to \$3,500 or possibly more. For the same money, you can get two of their Loaded models, one for you and one for Cheryl."

"Cheryl and I are divorced."

“Sorry, Paul, I hadn’t heard.”

“No big deal. However, having two rifles might be good. I’d have a backup in case one failed or maybe one for someone I might meet. What about the shotgun?”

“I’d recommend the Mossberg 590A1, that’s the one with the ghost ring sights. As far as handguns go, it all depends on what you want. You can’t go wrong with a .45acp, it has knockdown power. However, a 9mm loaded with +P hollow points will work too.”

“Any recommendations?”

“I don’t happen to like Glock, but that’s personal preference. If you went with the .45 that Springfield manufactures for the FBI, it will set you back around \$2,100. You can get a Kimber Tactical Pro II for half of that. Or, you can go with the Taurus, PT1911, very popular these days for around \$600.”

“What about a 9mm?”

“Well, I don’t sell the Beretta, the one the military uses. That’s a model 92FS. I have a long standing preference for the Browning Hi-Power Classic.”

“Ok, here’s what I want you to do. Price out the following: 2 M1A Loaded, 2 Mossberg 590A1s, 2 Taurus PT1911s and 2 Browning Hi-Power Classics.”

“Do you want the walnut stock or synthetic stock on the rifles?”

“What do you recommend?”

“Synthetic. Do you want the pistol blued or stainless?”

“Recommendation?”

“Blued.”

“Fine.”

“It will take a few minutes.”

“I’m in no hurry. How fast can you get them in?”

“Overnight, if you pay the extra shipping. The rifles, I can do for \$1,500 each, the shot-guns \$500 each, the .45s \$600 and the 9mms for \$900. That’s a total of…”

“\$7,000.”

“Right, Paul. Do you want extra magazines? The rifles come with one 10-rounder and I recommend more, but in 20-round size. I’d also recommend extra magazines for the pistols. I prefer 7 magazines per pistol myself.”

“How much are the rifle magazines?”

“If I get them from Springfield, they’re expensive; if I go generic and buy the CMI made ones, they’re the current government magazine. I’d recommend 50.”

“Ok, here’s six grand. Get the generic rifle mags and make sure each pistol has 7 magazines. I’ll pay the rest when we settle up.”

“Right, let’s get started on the 4473s.”

Of course, that wasn’t counting sales tax or ammo. I’d had \$450,000 left after the realtor took his commission from the sale of the home. Roughly half of that went into filling the fuel tanks and buying the PRI products. The generator and improvements on the farm were in the job file, a job that wouldn’t be finished anytime soon. I’m a completed job, cash basis taxpayer and wouldn’t recover those expenses until the job was closed.

Next, I had to stock my bug-out home with food. I looked at Nitro-Pak, Walton Feed, and several other places before I decided. I went with Nitro-Pak, getting enough for 4 people for one year. To that I added enough from Walton for 4 people for one year; surely if TSHTF, a two-year supply of food for 4 people was enough. Just in case, I ordered seeds from the Ark Institute, 6 sets. I also ordered canning jars, quart and pint, extra lids and a pair of All American 30 quart pressure canners. To that, I added a Country Living Grain Mill, a complete power unit and extra grinding wheels and parts.

I noticed that gold and silver were beginning to take off and bought 3 \$1,000 face value bags of junk silver and 24 additional Krugerrands. I got out of that house just in time, the prices began to plummet. I was commuting to work from the farm and while I had some pantry items, I mostly ate out, which was beginning to get expensive.

Anyway, my guns came in and I paid Bob the balance due. Then I asked him about ammo and was surprised at his response.

“Well... that depends on what you want the rifles for. But my guess is that your primary interest is self-defense, right?”

“I had that in mind, Bob.”

“I can get you 10,000 rounds of surplus that’s near match grade for \$5,000, delivered to your door. I’d recommend Speer ammo for the pistols, 200gr Lawman FMJ and 200gr +P Gold Dot Hollow Point for the .45; for the 9mm, 124gr. Lawman FMJ and 124gr +P Gold Dot Hollow Point.”

“How many rounds of pistol ammo?”

“You can never have too much ammo, Paul. Say 1,000 rounds of each item. That leaves the shotguns. My personal favorite is the most accurate, Remington 8-pellet 00 buck, managed recoil. I’d say 500 rounds of that per shotgun and another 500 rounds each of number 4 buck. I’d also add 500 rounds per shotgun of Brenneke slugs.”

“Add it up and I’ll write a check.”

“It will take about 3 days to get it in. Give me a minute, damn I hate calculators.”

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It was a shock to learn that surplus ammo for the rifles ran around 50¢ a round. What the hell, gas was getting close to \$4 a gallon out in California, if it hadn’t already. The nation price was around three and a quarter. Instead of buying a gun safe, I took an unused metal office cabinet with a locking handle home. I removed the shelves and measured. The next day, I had one of the guys fabricate me a vertical rifle rack for 8 guns. I put in my papers for a CCW and when I picked up the ammo, asked Bob about holsters.

“I’d go with IWB paddle holsters, if it were me. I have them in stock for both guns.”

“I’ll take them.”

“Aren’t you going to ask how much?”

“Would that lower the price?”

“The best I can do is my cost, which will save you a few bucks. I’ll throw in some double magazine pouches, three of each caliber.”

If you added up what I’d spent in that one store, he could have thrown in more ammo and still made a profit. The only thing missing was a storm shelter and some stuff from Gonzales, Texas that I read about on a survival website. When we had a very slow week, I kept my guys busy putting in that shelter. I couldn’t find any plans I liked and decided to design my own. Beneath the floor, they install a 1,000-gallon black water tank and a 5,000 gallon water tank which was plumbed to the windmill. They poured the footings and then the walls and followed it up with the floor. Before they closed it in, I had them put in bunks to sleep four. A freezer and one of those combination kitchen appliances with a 4-way with sink, stove, oven, refrigerator and I added a microwave. I put my old TV down there and an assortment of my DVDs and VHS tapes. I had one of those dual VHS, DVD players. I wanted a flat panel TV anyway and the new standard was HDTV with discs recorded using Blu-ray. I figured if I wanted to watch one of my old movies, I’d just go to the storm shelter.

When I bought the freezer, I bought two. The first was a 12ft<sup>3</sup> upright for the shelter and the second a 25ft<sup>3</sup> chest type for the house. One of the most endearing qualities to the old farm house was its cooking and heating arrangements. It had a fire place, a wood/coal furnace and a wood burning kitchen stove. The hot water heater was a later addition and fueled by electricity. The realtor said they'd reduced the price to reflect the older appliances. I didn't say anything; I actually preferred them, in case TSHTF. However, I did eat out more.

One of my guys was into this stuff and he told me that I needed an air filter. I told him to call and order it and to speak to Glenda to wire the funds. Glenda was my payroll person/bookkeeper. She was younger than me at 23, single, attractive, etc. I interviewed several women for the job, but picked her because she was smart and had the biggest breasts. Some guys just aren't honest.

The guys moved my generator underground, beneath the stairs leading to the shelter door. They plumbed an intake and exhaust and capped them with blast valves. Another improvement my guy recommended was a blast door at the top of the stairs. About this time, I figured I'd have to give up eating out because I had less than 100 grand of the house money left.

With the long days I was putting in, the house got dusty and then just plain dirty. I asked Glenda if she could recommend someone to do house work. She asked what I needed and I told her just someone to come in once a week, clean the place up, dust, mop floors, ergo, the usual.

"Paul, do you care which day the work is done?"

"No, why?"

"I'll do it; I could use a little extra money right now."

"Don't I pay you enough?"

"Of course you do. It's not that, you see, I'm a prepper and am trying to put together enough cash to get this really good first aid kit I saw on a website. After that, I want to lay in a one year supply of food, extra water, bathroom tissue and so forth."

"That sounds like a lot, where would you store it?"

"My apartment is too small so I'd probably get a storage locker. You're a prepper too, aren't you?"

"I never thought about it. I don't like the way things have been going and after getting kicked in the teeth by Cheryl, I bought the house in the country and sold the one we lived in, in the city. I've never had a real prepper analyze my set up. If you want to clean the house and assess my situation, I'll pay \$10 an hour."

“Good, in a month, I’ll have the money for some of the stuff I want.”

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When Glenda showed up Saturday, she had a lot of cleaning supplies. I told her to add what she spent to the bill and I’d pay for them. She started upstairs, stripped my bed and put the sheets in the laundry. I directed her to clean sheets in a linen cabinet. I could hear her humming away as she went about the cleaning. She got the vacuum cleaner and cleaned down the stairs. She then put the sheets in the dryer and put the bedspread in the wash. It started to get towards noon and time for lunch. I offered her a selection of microwave meals and we sat down to eat.

“Your home is more dusty than dirty. I should be done around three.”

“Good, you can look over what few preps I’ve made and make suggestions. By the way, I don’t have a first aid kit and should have one. On Monday, call and order two and have the company pay for them.”

“Oh, I couldn’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“I wouldn’t want to be obligated.”

“No strings attached, I really do need a first aid kit and this way, I shouldn’t go wrong.”

“I have researched them extensively, Paul. This kit appears to be the most comprehensive. What it’s lacking, my doctor will prescribe, I’ll already asked.”

“For example?”

“Analgesics, antibiotics, blood replacement products and that sort of thing.”

“You know how to start an IV?”

“Yes, I took a class.”

“Maybe I should take it.”

“They have one that has several procedures, CPR, establishing an IV, the right way to suture, etc.”

“Have you taken them all?”

“Actually yes, plus I am an EMT-2.”

“You don’t say. If you want to take on the role of on-site company nurse, I raise your wages.”

“Gee, I don’t know.”

“Look, all you would have to do is assess the injury and provide an appropriate response, like calling an ambulance.”

“Will you pay for the liability insurance?”

“Company obligation and you’d better order three of those first aid kits.”

“How much of a raise?”

“How much do you want?”

“I don’t know. I’m afraid if I give you a figure, it will be lower than what you intended to give and I just talked myself out of a raise.”

“Five dollars an hour.”

“You just hired a company nurse.”

“There’s the dryer, I’ll fold the sheets, put them in the linen closet and put the bedspread in the dryer. While it’s drying, I can finish cleaning up.”

She actually didn’t do those things in that order; she took the sheets out, set them aside, put the spread in the dryer, folded the sheets and put them away. She was a model of efficiency. She was using Pine Sol in the kitchen and I liked the smell because it smelled clean. When the dryer buzzed again, she got the bedspread, folded it and put it away. When she finished up, I gave her a blank pad and a ball point.

“As we go through my preparations, write down anything I need. If it’s something you need too, add a check mark. Let’s start in the basement.”

“Ok, that pile over there is the stuff I got from Walton Feed. It’s enough food for four people for a year. Next to it is the stuff I got from Nitro-Pak. It’s enough for two people for one year and there is enough for two more people for a year in the shelter.”

“Do you have bathroom tissue?”

“There’s some in the bathroom.”

“That’s not what I mean. You have enough food for one person for eight years and no extra bathroom tissue?”



“Put it on the list. And, put a check next to it because you said you needed some.”

“Your pickup is gasoline, right?”

“Right.”

“I didn’t see a farm tank of gasoline when I drove in.”

“Add it to the list.”

“Where is your firewood pile?”

“Next to the house.”

“Let’s look.”

“Sure.”

“You have about one third of a cord, what they call a face cord. You’d need much more than that when it gets cold.”

“Add it to the list.”

“How about we look at the shelter next?”

“Ok, it’s over here. It’s close to the house in case a tornado pops up or something.”

“I paid for the blast door, the blast valves and the AV-150, remember?”

“Oh, right.”

“The generator is there under the stairs. The wall is sound proofed to reduce the noise inside. There is a double layer of soundproofing on the steel door. Ok, the food is stacked over there, that’s the 4 in 1 kitchen, there’s the TV and the DVD/VHS player and the bunks are right there. The enclosed area is a ¾ bath. The total is around 400ft<sup>2</sup>. More than 4 people would make it a bit close and people would have to sleep in shifts if you were down here that long.”

“I don’t really see anything wrong with this, what’s in that cabinet?”

“Firearms.”

“May I see?”

I unlocked the door and she looked at the guns.

“Ok, two M1As, two Mossberg 590A1s, a .22 rifle, an 870 and a Winchester model 70, .308. Four hand guns on the top shelf, 2 .45acp and 2 9mm; plus extra magazines and a little ammo.”

“There’s more ammo in the basement, I forgot to point out, Glenda. I have 10,000-rounds of 7.62×51mm NATO, 1,000-rounds each of two different bullets for each pistol and 1,500 assorted rounds of shotgun ammo for the Mossberg’s.”

“Any hunting ammo?”

“Not much, add it to the list.”

“That’s it for now, Paul. Let’s go to the kitchen and figure up how much time I spent.”

“Ok, I got here at 9 and it’s now 4, less a half hour for lunch. Call it six and one half hours.”

“Call it seven, I don’t have a five. Here you go, 3 twenties and one ten. Do you have plans for dinner tonight?”

“No, I was just going to go home and clean up.”

“I wasn’t thinking fancy; maybe someplace we could go as we are.”

“Do you like Pizza Hut?”

“Pizza and beer sounds good.”

“I might have one glass, but I don’t often drink.”

“I was only thinking a small pitcher. What kind of pizza do you like?”

“I won’t eat dead fish.”

“We’ll look at the menu and pick something together.”

“Ok, but you understand that this isn’t date, don’t you?”

“I’m just treating a member of my staff to a meal, my prerogative.”

“Do you have radiation meters?”

## Trapped – Chapter 2

“I bought the package from Radmeters4U and added a Geiger counter and a remote sensing survey meter. It came with two bottles of KI and three dosimeters, plus the charger and some CDs.”

“I’d recommend KIO<sub>3</sub> from Medical Corps.org. It tastes better and you need four bottles if you have four bunks. While you’re at it, you should get at least one more CD V-742.”

“One per bunk?”

“Yes.”

“Add it to the list. I’m going to ask you to order some of the things I need, Glenda. Why don’t you see about having a 2,000 gallon farm tank put in using our new gas supplier? There is a place you can order PRI-G by the gallon and a gallon is needed to treat 2,000-gallons of gas. There’s a place on the web, uh, Batterystuff.com; order 4-gallons. I’ll take care of the bathroom tissue and get at least a truck load. I’ll get the ammo, too. You can call around for firewood and order enough for two years of very cold weather.”

“Can do.”

“I’ll eat anything but dead fish too; you order and I’ll go wash up.”

Glenda had a point, why would a person have 8 years’ worth of food and just a few rolls of bathroom tissue? I thought of several other things I should add, soft drinks, just to name one; maybe a few cases of medicinal Tennessee sipping whiskey, in case of injuries. I also need to add an electric cooktop to the kitchen and maybe an electric oven. My clothes dryer was electric and I did have a big generator.

“The order in?”

“I got that all meat thing with hand tossed crust.”

“Sounds good. You said you didn’t drink often. Does that mean you prefer soft drinks?”

“Yes, I prefer Coke Classic, although it tasted better when they used real sugar.”

“Really had a zing didn’t it?”

“Yes, but I was just a little kid when they switched to high-fructose corn syrup. That was in 1985.”

“How do you know that?”

“My father stocked Coca-Cola vending machines. I can’t remember, the bottles were either 10oz or 11oz and he bought several cases of the old formula. There were 24 bottles per case and he must have had 50-60 cases. We didn’t run out until the early ‘90s.”

“I remember those, but I haven’t seen them in a while.”

“Everything these days is in cans.”

“How did you get into prepping?”

“I suppose I was 14-15 when that Y2K thing was going around. I was still in high school and... the pizza is here.”

“Looks good, please continue between bites.”

“It was my father and mother who got into it first. They didn’t believe the problem would be bad but didn’t want to take a chance. They didn’t keep much money in the bank, paid cash for most everything and stocked up on food and ammo. What got you started?”

“When I saw the rising price of gas and that the economy was tanking, I sat down and gave it some thought. I bought some gold and silver. Of course there was the divorce and I was tired of where I was living and wanted to get out in the country. Bought the farm through the business, sold the house and invested most of the money in preparedness.”

“You never talked about the divorce.”

“No much to say, Cheryl was a gold digger who had a job I didn’t know about. Then she began an affair with her boss which resulted in her suing me for a divorce. She’ll get hers, someday.”

“I wondered why you put in 12 hour days.”

“It was 10 hour days before the divorce. Then I had free time so I worked longer; something to fill the time.”

“You don’t date?”

“Once burned, twice shy. Do you date?”

“Not much, they all expect something in return if they take you out to dinner or something; you know what I mean.”

“Bed time, I know. Is that why you insisted that this wasn’t a date?”

“It’s your policy, no dating among employees.”

“I’m not exactly an employee.”

“No, you’re an employer, that’s more complicated. When you were interviewing all of the candidates, I visited with the others. Most of them were way more qualified for the job than I was. Yet, when you made a decision, you hired me. That puzzled me for a long time before I figured it out. I was the applicant with the biggest breasts.”

“That’s true. However, while you lacked experience, you were smarter than the rest. You’re not hard on a man’s eyes and I wasn’t asking for a date. Besides, who made the rule and who can change it?”

“Do you still want me to clean the house?”

“Absolutely; however, how about me paying you a set fee of \$75?”

“What else do you want me to do?”

“My laundry.”

“\$80.”

“Ok, \$80.”

“What about the consulting on your preparations?”

“That will be extra, still \$10 an hour.”

“Ok, but there won’t be much more consulting to do. Except for a few oversights, you did rather well.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere.”

“For the moment, no, thank you.”

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Glenda could be playing hard to get, following company policy or not interested and I didn’t have a clue. When she got into talking preparedness, I was totally impressed. Some of the things she said made sense and I went out on the web to some of those websites that discussed preparedness. One guy name TOM wrote stories and was a member of the beans, rice and toilet paper crowd. Another guy who must love dogs (he went by Fleataxi) had a series about Alaska. There were lots of good ideas and some not so cool, but each to his own, I wasn’t enamored with the .223. Let me correct that, I wasn’t enamored by the Colt M16 and AR15 with its direct gas impingement system. It dirtied the gun up and caused failures to feed, failures to extract and double feeds. I

read an article on Wikipedia about that new HK416 and HK 417 that used a piston and was supposed be available next quarter for civilian purchase.

I put in a call to Bob on Monday and told him I'd take the first two HK416s and HK417s and he could get and 25 magazines per rifle. He wanted to know the barrel length and I told him 20". I also told him that it appeared to me that M855 and M118LR was the best ammo choice and he agreed. I told him 10,000-rounds. I joked that if I had a .458 Winchester model 70, I could hunt elephants. He said he'd go me one better if I wanted to spend the money.

"What's bigger than a .458?"

"A .50 caliber Barrett, semi-auto model M82A1 or M82A1M; there's a difference, the military model has optional parts."

"Iron sights?"

"For backup, yes; I'd recommend Barrett's BORS system using a high power Leopold scope. That rifle has a range of 2,000-meters. The rifle runs \$8,900 and the sight \$2,700. I can cut you a little slack on the price and discount the ammo to \$4 a round. It uses 10-round magazines and I'd suggest you get several."

"Put together a package, compute the price and call me back."

"You have a call on line two."

"Paul Kersey. Oh. Hi Bob, got the price?"

"Are you sitting down?"

"Yes, why?"

"Here's the run down at retail and I'll discuss the discount in a moment. Rifle same as the military M107, \$8,900; Leopold Mark IV scope with BORS, \$2,700; Ammo, \$340 per 80 round case of M33 ball; and extra magazines nine times \$135, or \$1,215. Due to the shortage I can't offer a discount. The total is \$16,215 plus tax."

"It the rifle gold plated?"

"Parkerized and anodized."

"Are you sure you didn't forget some option?"

"I didn't include night vision. It ain't cheap."

"What, five grand?"

“More like 10 grand for the MUNS generation 3 scope. I’ll sell that to you at my cost plus \$100 if you want one.”

“That’s a little over a quarter of the money I have left to spend on this project. Will I need anything else in the firearms department besides the .50 caliber and the four HKs”

“I wouldn’t think so. Still buying in twos, got someone in mind to use the second firearms?”

“You know what, I just might. However, there’s an age difference of about 10 years.”

“Robbing the cradle?”

“Not quite, but close.”

“Anyone I know?”

“Let’s just say no and leave it at that for now.”

“I only have one other customer like you and he’s a self-ordained survivalist. Is that what you are?”

“I’d prefer to think I’m being prudent and preparing ahead a little.”

“I’ll need \$10 grand down to place the orders and COD on delivery. For two cents I’d call it a day and close up shop.”

“I’ll be over in about 30 minutes with a check and fill out the 4473. Any idea on when the 416s will be available?”

“Let’s say around October first. I’ll place the order, but we’ll have to wait on them to ship when they’re released. Say, I couldn’t interest you in a couple of backup pieces?”

“Maybe, what?”

“Walther PPK in .380.”

“I’ll check with my consultant and get back to you. I’ll know when I come in.”

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“Glenda, what can you tell me about the Walther PPK?”

“Small, highly concealable, 9mm short designed by John Moses Browning. Most say it’s the minimum power for a backup gun. Best choice would be to shoot Gold Dot.”

“If I were thinking of buying one would you recommend it or not?”

“Do you have a CCW?”

“I’ve applied for one.”

“Then I’d say go for it.”

“Thanks.”

“Make out a check for \$10 thousand payable to Bob’s Gun Store and charge it against my draw account. I need it in 15 minutes tops.”

“Can do.”

“Ok Bob, this is your lucky day. I’ll take two of the PPKs with IWB holsters and the 5 magazines. I’ll want 500-rounds of Lawman and 500-rounds of Gold Dot short barrel. Here’s the check for ten thousand. Let’s get started on the forms, I have to get back to work.”

“It may take a while, Barrett is backed up on orders, but I know a dealer who will wholesale them to me provided I replace them with the ones I order. I’ll still get the magazines and ammo. Need anything else; I know where I can get a M198.”

“What’s that?”

“A 155mm artillery piece.”

“I think I’ll pass.”

“You must be burning through the ammo.”

“I haven’t shot any of them yet; I had some loose ends to tie up before I could spend some serious time on the range.”

“How big is your range?”

“500 meters.”

“That’s like 750 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean.”

“How’s that?”

“It’s a good start. I’ll call when I get the stuff in.”



“Thanks. Gotta go.”

I lived in a state where a CCW served in place of the NCIS background check and I could hardly wait to get my permit.

“Did you get one?”

“Yep, he had to order it. The bulk of the money was for a Barrett M82.”

“Expensive, huh?”

“You have no idea.”

“What kind of optics?”

“BORS plus Leopold Mk IV 8.5x25-50 ET/T M1.”

“Sniper setup. What did you get for ammo?”

“800-rounds of Barrett M33 ball.”

“You also need some HEIAP.”

“What’s that?”

“Military sniper ammo. If you can come up with the money, I can come up with the ammo. Keep in mind, it’s military only and considered a destructive device.”

“What else can you get?”

“What else do you need?”

“I suppose I could use dynamite as grenades, but I’d rather have the original.”

“How many?”

“Would a gross be too many?”

“I’ll have to check, but I don’t believe so.”

“That will really round out my little armory.”

“About the only thing you’re missing is Lightweight Anti-tank Weapons, also known as LAW rockets. I might be able to get two crates but that’s iffy.”

“If you can get either, make out a check and I’ll sign it. You can convert it to cash and claim an expense reimbursement, charging the expenses to my pet project as a change order.”

Glenda made a 30 plus minute phone call, made out a check and had me sign it. The check was for \$3,450, one hundred a pop on the rockets and three bucks apiece for the grenades. I overheard a portion of the conversation and it sounded like she was talking to someone she was close too. Oh well, so much for that idea.

On Tuesday morning she came into my office and told me we’d have to both go to the farm that night because the items I wanted were in her trunk and under a blanket in her back seat. I told you she was efficient. She said the HEIAP would run \$250 per ammo can of 120 rounds and she could only get it one can at a time. I suggested she up the petty cash fund to a higher level and take the money from there.

Over a period of weeks, she accumulated the HEIAP ammo, one can at a time. This was usually preceded by a lengthy phone call to her boyfriend. Glenda kept my house spic and span; it was easier with her doing it weekly. Other than the first phone call, I hadn’t overheard the other phone calls.

After we had all of the ammo I wanted, she stopped calling that fellow, so maybe I was wrong. As I said, I got the impression they were close. I also got the impression that while she did it, she didn’t like buying those things, for some reason. Using her original list, I filled in the holes in my preparations and she got prescriptions from her doctor to supply her needs and my shelter. We didn’t keep any of those items at work; it was easier to call an ambulance.

Bob called and told me he couldn’t get a Barrett. He recommended a McMillan Tac-50, which he could get, for the same money or less. I told him to go for it. A week later he had the rifle \$8999, with an upgraded scope for \$77 extra, a night vision rail for \$310 extra, 8 extra magazines for \$2,640 extra, suppressor \$1295, maintenance kits for \$251 and MUNS \$10,300. Total cost \$23,356. He hadn’t ordered the ammo and now recommended Hornady 750gr A-MAX Match. I told him to get 10 cases. The grand total came to \$33,356 plus tax. He quickly pointed out that the McMillan was warrantied to shoot 0.5MOA or less. I asked about night vision and he said he’d check on it, someone had a new night vision out and he’d sell it to me for his cost.

One Saturday after we finished up early, I suggested we go shooting. I opened the cabinet and she helped herself to a M1A and the Browning. I broke open a case of the surplus and grabbed a handful of targets. They had folds on the sides and you could use rebar or something to hold them up. It was totally calm that afternoon and we didn’t have to worry about wind adjustments. It didn’t take long to sight the rifles in; they were actually pretty close right out of the box.

I moved to the Tac-50 and got it sighted in easily. At 500 meters, the rifle was spot on. We moved closer and worked with the pistols for a while. I felt like saying, “And she can

shoot too!" It got on to 4pm and she said she had something to take care of that evening and wouldn't be able to join me for pizza and beer. I assumed she had a date and told her I'd see her Monday.

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Bright and early Monday morning Bob called, sounding excited.

"I got them, they just came in and boy, are they beauties."

"Hold on Bob, what are you talking about?"

"Those HK416s and HK417s you wanted. I got them in with the magazines and I'll have the 20,000-rounds of ammo this afternoon."

"Would it be ok if I just came in tomorrow, paid for everything and picked it all up?"

"I'll have everything ready, see ya."

Glenda was late getting to work, very late. She looked like she'd been crying. I'm a good employer and try to help my employees when I can. I asked.

"Is there something wrong?"

"It's my brother in the Army. He overdosed."

"Come into my office, close the door and we can talk."

She hesitated and then nodded. She came in and sat down and it began to flood out.

"My source for those things we got from the Army was my brother. He works in logistics. I didn't know he had a drug problem, honestly. The money we paid him allowed him to buy drugs and he overdosed. His Sergeant said he was as surprised as I was and that my brother was a good soldier, with a problem. He didn't know if he could save my brother's career or not."

"How, long has he been in?"

"Eleven years and attained the rank of Sergeant, E-5. His boss is a Sergeant First Class. I feel so guilty. If we hadn't bought those things, he wouldn't have had the money and wouldn't have been able to do drugs."

"I'm sorry we contributed to it Glenda. Had I known, I wouldn't have made it possible. However, the money we provided him lately probably wasn't enough to allow him to do more than maintain his habit. He must have made a sale to someone else to allow him to do that. If he loses his career, we'll see what we can do to find him a place here."

“You’d do that?”

“I said I would and I don’t need the boss’s permission.”

“I’d better get back to work, thanks for talking to me.”

The subject of her brother didn’t come up much the rest of the week; he was still in the hospital and was supposed to be transferred to confinement when he was released. At the minimum, he’d get an Article 15 and at the maximum, confinement and discharge. I wasn’t in the military because I failed the enlistment physical.

Her brother, George, lucked out and got a general discharge. I found a job he could do that would allow him to learn and advance. He got the same wages as everyone else, based on position and seniority. Glenda continued to clean my house and some Saturday nights we’d went somewhere besides Pizza Hut. I’ll admit; I was getting fond of this young lady.

She must have felt comfortable around me too, she made a confession. She didn’t have the largest breasts; she wore a padded bra that added a cup size. I was her employer at work and on Saturdays and she made sure I observed the company policy, although she didn’t have to bring along dress up clothes and spend 30 minutes getting ready to go out to eat. We continued to spend time on the range, getting proficient with each of the weapons. George came out and gave us minimal instruction on the LAW and the hand grenades.

One night after steak and wine at one of the better establishments, Glenda must have had too much wine and she came on to me. It had been a while and I really liked her, but I resisted, carefully steering her away from the subject. It could have just as easily been the other way, my having one too many drinks and trying to get familiar. She was too tipsy to drive, so I took her back to my place and put her up in one of the spare bedrooms. If a woman wants to crawl into my bed, she’d better have her wits about her and know what to expect.

In the morning, I got up, showered and shaved and put on a pot of coffee. Glenda showed up around 9am.

“I think I had too much to drink last night.”

“There’s Tylenol in the medicine cabinet and hot coffee. What would you like for breakfast?”

“I couldn’t look at food right now, the coffee will be enough.”

“Do you have another outfit you can change into?”

“I brought spare jeans and a blouse; I’m usually afraid I might spill something and need to change.”

“Well, have your coffee. You can shower and get in clean clothes and should feel better.”

“Did I do anything last night to be ashamed of?”

### Trapped – Chapter 3

“What do you mean?”

“I have this vague recollection of coming on to you.”

“You did. I figured you’d just had too much wine and decided you shouldn’t drive. I showed you to the spare bedroom and I went to bed, alone.”

“Sorry about that.”

“They say that alcohol loosens inhibitions. It allows people to overcome something that may be holding them back and they reveal their true feelings, good or bad.”

“They do huh? Ok, I’ll admit it; I am attracted to you despite your age.”

“I’m getting especially fond of you too, Glenda.”

“So what next, just go jump in the hay?”

“I have a better idea. Finish your coffee, get a shower and get dressed. I’d like to spend some time doing a last minute check of my preparations under your expert eye.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere.”

“That line doesn’t work, I already tried it.”

Glenda had a dark blouse on when she came down and while it was opaque, I could tell she wasn’t wearing a bra for the first time since I’d first interviewed her. I didn’t comment. We spent the next four hours going through my supplies, carefully; looking for anything I may have missed.

“Now I see what you’re missing.”

“What is that?”

“A ham radio. If there were an emergency, survivors would maintain communications using amateur radio.”

“What does that take?”

“A radio with built in antenna tuner, coaxial cable, a tower or mast and an antenna.”

“Any recommendations?”

"Icom, Yaesu or Kenwood are all good. You can get a mast and mount a vertical multi-band antenna."

"Do you know where to get the stuff?"

"Either AES or Ham Radio Outlet."

"Order it for immediate delivery tomorrow. Pay for overnight shipping, I don't like loose ends. How are you doing on your preps?"

"Despite the extra money, it's going slowly. I can get by for a while, but I'm missing a few important things."

"Like what?"

"I have the beans and rice type of preps, stored flour, Coleman stove and oven, feminine hygiene supplies, toilet tissue and so forth. I don't really have a good place to shelter."

"How much do you pay in rent a month?"

"Five hundred, why?"

"What's that for, a one bedroom or efficiency?"

"It's about the same difference, what are you getting at?"

"Just this; I have a three bedroom house in the country and live alone. I hire you to keep the house. Say for instance, you gave up your apartment and moved here. I wouldn't charge you rent and wouldn't pay you to keep house. Keeping house would be your sole obligation. Let me emphasize you wouldn't have any other obligation. We could merge our preps because I don't have things like feminine hygiene supplies. And, you can never have too much bathroom tissue."

"I don't know what to say. What would people think?"

"I'm pretty sure you know what they'd think. I don't care what people think, but I wouldn't want to put you on the spot."

"George lives with me and sleeps on the couch."

"There are three bedrooms. With George here, it would stop some of the wagging tongues."

"It might, huh?"

“I had the farm buildings restored but never had time to get livestock. Does George know anything about farming?”

“Does being raised on a Missouri farm count?”

“I didn’t know you were a farm girl. You said your father delivered coke.”

“He did. He was also what they call a weekend or hobby farmer. It was only a 160 or quarter section that he inherited from his father. There were about 90 tillable acres. He farmed crops, but George always had a beef, a couple of feeder hogs and a saddle horse. My mother had chickens and sold eggs. I know; I used to hand wash them.”

“Then you ride?”

“Doesn’t everyone?”

“I don’t.”

“City boy?”

“Born and bred.”

“I haven’t seen any farm equipment.”

“Didn’t get any, the whole farm is seeded to pasture.”

“But you don’t have livestock to eat the grass. How do you keep it short, cut it?”

“My neighbor leases the pasture for his cattle to graze. The realtor I brought the place through said the ground hadn’t been turned in 10 years.”

“What a waste. Why don’t you buy some used farm equipment and hire George to farm a portion of the land? You could grow beef, hogs and chickens and raise their feed.”

“Does that mean you’re saying yes to closing up your apartment and moving here?”

“Ok, but under the terms discussed.”

o

Glenda saw to it that I got a Technicians license. She picked out an Icom multiband transceiver. She got a separate receiver/scanner. Once the equipment came in, she did a turnkey project with a local radio shop for installation. She added Icom mobiles to all four of our vehicles. She also got the latest and greatest FRS/GMRS radios, about 6 pairs. George had the bedroom next to mine and she took the other. Because we were now eating at home, I had my guys install an electric wall oven and counter top. I gave



George the same pay he had been making and told him I'd give him a percentage of any profits. The first year, he plowed 120 acres, putting 40 in corn, 40 in soybeans, 20 in oats and 20 into alfalfa.

He found moderately good used equipment and either had it rebuilt or rebuilt it himself. By this time, everything was being funded through that job account. What residual money I had, I was hanging on to. He bought a bred dairy cow for milk, one bred sow for pigs and one feeder beef and 2 feeder hogs. When pullets were available, Glenda bought around two hundred. There was a fenced yard around the chicken house and when the birds were old enough, George clipped their wings so they couldn't fly.

We went to a horse auction and bought four 3-year-old Morgan fillies. Glenda suggested we wait a year to breed them. She also said that since horses don't reach full growth until the 4-6 age range, we should hold off on saddles. I had to go see Bob again, I had a new need, but it wasn't pressing.

"Bob, how's business?"

"It looks better since I saw you coming in the door. What can I do for you today?"

"We bought four horses and..."

"We?"

"We. Glenda's brother works for me now on the farm. She lives there too and cleans the house in exchange for rent. Anyway, tell me about cowboy guns."

"Getting into Single Action Shooting?"

"No, I'm not. Tell me about cowboy guns."

"It really started with the 1873 Colt Single Action Army, also called the Peacemaker. Colt still makes them but few people can afford them. Ruger makes a clone called the Vaquero built on the Blackhawk frame and Beretta makes a clone call the Stampede. They're generally available in .357 and .45 Colt. The Stampede runs around \$600, the Vaquero \$640. There are four barrel lengths, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ ", 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Most people order their leather direct from the factory, El Paso Saddlery, Kirkpatrick Leather and Alfonso's of Hollywood out in California, to name some. You tell them what guns you have and your measurements and they put together the rig. They aren't always inexpensive."

"Fine, recommendations?"

"Three people? I'd go for the original Ruger Vaqueros, 1 of each length. You know how I have my preferences by now, so I'd recommend Kirkpatrick Leather in Laredo. I like the looks of the Laredoan."

“Fine, order three sets of Rugers, just like that. Talk rifles.”

“Winchester stopped making rifles, so for an American rifle, that leaves Marlin. They can be had in .22, .357, .45 Colt and .44 magnum or .45-70. If it was my choice, I’d go with the .45 Colt 1894 Cowboy and .45-70 1895 Cowboy.”

“Order rifles for four.”

“How much ammo do you want?”

“What do you recommend?”

“Cowboy loads for practice and Buffalo Bore full power loads; they aren’t cheap.”

“Ok, say Buffalo Bore, 2,500 Colt and 2,500 .45-70 and cowboy loads in .45 Colt only. Where do I get scabbards?”

“Fitzpatrick has them to fit every rifle.”

“I have my CCW now; take a photocopy for your records.”

“Does your girlfriend have one?”

“Are you referring to my employee Glenda? I’ll have to ask.”

o

“So, do you or do you not have a CCW?”

“I have the CCW, I don’t have a gun.”

“Get one of the PPKs out of the cabinet and carry it. I bought two with you in mind.”

“You did huh? What else did you have in mind?”

“Don’t be coy. I was hoping we might become a couple. There, I said it, satisfied.”

“But we are.”

“We are what?”

“We are a couple, with a chaperone.”

“With a chaperone, just great.”

“It’s mostly for looks, Paul. George couldn’t care one way or the other.”

“How do you know?”

“He asked me if we were sleeping together and I jumped down his throat. His response was he was just curious; he could have cared less.”

“So do you move in with me or do we keep separate bedrooms?”

“Both. Separate bedrooms for appearances, but I’ll move in with you. Where were you this morning?”

“I went to see Bob.”

“Buy anything?”

“Four Marlin 1894 and four 1895 cowboy rifles and three sets of Ruger Vaqueros.”

“Kirkpatrick Leather is your best choice for holsters and scabbards. You’d look cute in the Laredoan with the 4<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>” revolver in the cross draw holster.”

“I got George and you a full set of Ruger Vaqueros, the original models.”

“I get everyone’s measurements and place an order, why revolvers for three people and rifles for four?”

“Call George and tell him to make it four sets of revolvers. Tell him to up the .45 Colt cowboy loads to 10 cases. Get a holster for the gun but make the belt separate, like what John Wayne wore in the movies. We can always shorten the gun belt.”

“George is seeing someone, you know.”

“No I didn’t, is it serious?”

“My impression is that it is.”

“If you can get her measurements, order the regular Laredoan rig for her, too.”

Bob ordered 5,000 rounds of Winchester .45 Colt cowboy loads and 1,500 rounds each of the powerful Buffalo Bore ammo in 260gr .45 Colt and 405gr .45-70. He had all of the paperwork done and I signed a few lines and gave him the check that Glenda had cut for him; another charge to the special job account. I planned to show any farm income in the same account, thereby offsetting the expense and making any auditors happy. The guns were in and the leather had been shipped.

George took care of getting a farrier and saddles, when he thought the horses were old enough. We had a busy summer despite the serious downturn in the economy. If I took

inflation into account, we'd made less than the previous year. At this point in time, the fall of 2008, the nation was holding its breath about the November elections. The Republican and Democratic candidates were in a dead heat in the polls with a margin of difference less than the statistical margin of error. I planned to vote for John McCain, the lesser of two evils. At least, he was a patriot, or had been. While I wasn't overwhelmed with our staying in Iraq, I was less enchanted with the idea of cutting and running. You couldn't check any online news source without finding out how many more had been killed or injured.

Tick, the clock struck 4

One other thing bothered me too. The Chinese held the Summer Games in Beijing and they had been too busy with protesters over that thing in Tibet to gain any advantage from hosting the Games. When the Games were over and everyone had gone home, they really clammed up. Very little news made it past their borders and none that did, was good. Asia lives on rice. The rice crop was one of the smallest per capita in modern memory. Rice provides more than one fifth of the calories consumed worldwide by humans.

Countries generally need a justification of some sort for attacking another country. The justification may be needed principally to galvanize support for the war internally (since citizens may not be happy about being expected to fight and die in a dubious cause), or else to galvanize the support of potential allies and reduce or avoid international sanctions or possible intervention. This has been the case for much of world history and is still the case today.

The term generally used is *Casus belli*. Informal usage varies beyond its technical definition to refer to any 'just cause' a nation may claim for entering into a conflict. As such, it has been used both retroactively to describe situations in history before the term came into wide usage and in the present day when describing situations when war has not been formally declared. An example of casus belli for the war on terror was 9/11. True casus belli could be wanting more land, needing food to feed your people and an assortment of things that didn't fall into the 'just cause' definition. In 2008, the only Asian country exporting rice was Thailand. The US imposes tariffs on imported rice, thereby subsidizing US rice production.

Taiwan's new President seemed to be leaning towards some kind of merger with China. The KMT increased its majority in the Legislative Yuan in the January 2008 legislative elections; while its nominee Ma Ying-jeou went on to win the presidency in March of the same year, campaigning on a platform of increased economic growth, and better ties with the Mainland under a policy of "mutual nondenial". Ma took office on May 20.

Tick, the clock struck 3

"Paul, I don't want to shake you up, but I just heard from a guy I know in the Army. The military have moved up to DEFCON 3."

“Did he say why?”

“He didn’t give specifics, but it has to do with China.”

“Any suggestions?”

“We don’t have much livestock. I have the first cutting of alfalfa and can stack it around the barn. We can cover it with plastic to keep water and, I don’t believe I’m saying this – fallout – off. We have ample feed supplies and if I had a trench or tunnel between the shelter and the barn, I could tend to the stock.”

“I’ll send a crew out immediately; we’ll use that road plate we have for construction jobs to cover the trench and move some soil over it. Will that do?”

“It should. Would it be ok with you if Stephanie moved in with us?”

“Is she the girlfriend Glenda mentioned?”

“Yes. We were thinking about getting married. I’m off drugs and have a good job so it seems possible.”

“Congratulations, if a bit premature.”

“Hey, thanks for everything. You’ve really helped turn my life around.”

“No more than your sister changed mine.”

“Are the two of you planning on getting married?”

“The subject really hasn’t come up in a long time; I’ll discuss it with her.”

“It looks like it’s time to praise the Lord and pass the ammunition, Glenda.”

“What’s up?”

“Did you talk to George?”

“Not yet, he’s helping Stephanie move her things to the farm.”

“Long story short, we’re at DEFCON 3 and it has something to do with China. Will you marry me?”

“What did you say?”

“I asked, will you marry me?”

“Over being shy?”

“Yes.”

“What are your qualifications?”

“Not good, my first marriage ended in divorce.”

“True, but you’re one hell of a lover. Ok, we’ll try it for a while.”

“How long is a while?”

“Oh, maybe 50 years.”

“We’ll eat out after we’re married; I’ll have to redeem a lot of favors quickly. Do you want a diamond or a simple wedding band?”

“A band.”

It was probably one of the most hurried up weddings in history and Glenda wasn’t even pregnant. We had to get rings, license and see my friend, the judge, in chambers. By 4pm, we were man and wife. I saw George and Stephanie following behind us about one step only they were going to use a Baptist minister. We attended their wedding and I got to give away the bride, Stephanie, not Glenda. I joked that dinner was on me and we’d eat at Burger King.

George didn’t have the money or time to buy wedding bands and we stopped by the same jewelry store we used and I bought them for them as a wedding present. Then we went to the most upscale place in town for dinner. I have my NOAA radio on the table, just in case. After dinner, we took them back to George’s pickup and we all went home. Glenda and I spent some time together, but I’ll admit I was restless.

Tick, the clock struck 2

I went down to the living room and turned on Fox News. They were doing a late broadcast from New York with breaking news.

*Fox News has learned from unnamed sources that the government is at DEFCON 3. This is related to the disappearance of the two Chinese type 94 Jin class SSBNs and the sailing of their fleet. Each SSBN carries 12 JL-2, NATO codename CSS-NX-4, missiles, each with 1 to 3 nuclear warheads and a maximum range of 8,000km. China can target three-quarters of the US with those weapons from home waters. It is believed that the sailing of the fleets is to assure their survival in case of war.*

In all of the hurry, I hadn't gotten Glenda a wedding present, would that turn out to be WW III? Somehow, I rather doubted she'd be happy with that as a gift. The next morning I called my office manager, Tom, and told him that Glenda and I had gotten married and wouldn't be in for a few days while we honeymooned. I told him that he could write any necessary checks and we'd be in on Friday to do the payroll. Our work week, for payroll purposes, was Friday through the following Thursday. When someone had to be let go on a Friday, we could just cut a check.

"I called in and told Tom we'd be off a few days on our honeymoon. I was up late last night watching Fox News and the hubbub is that the two Chinese SSBNs have fallen off the radar. I realized that I hadn't gotten you a wedding present and we're going to town to rectify that as soon as the stores open. You can have anything you want within reason. We have to stop by the bank and add your name to my checking and savings accounts, too; we'll do that first JTICWRS (joint tenants in common with rights of survivorship). If we have time, I'll have the lawyer do all the necessary paperwork on everything."

"I have what I want."

"So do I, but think long term. You're the prepper, what would you want to have, just in case?"

"That long term?"

"Yes."

"That's easy, maternity clothes, children's clothing that can be worn by children of either sex, diapers; wow, can we afford this?"

"It might be our last chance."

"Stephanie will need the same things I need."

"So, buy double, like I said, this could be our last chance."

"We'll need the pickup."

"Ok. I'll have a word with the bank manager and get him to raise my debit limit for one day only to \$10,000."

"You can do that?"

"If they agree you can. People sometimes need it to buy airline tickets and so forth."

"It won't break our bank?"

“It might bend it a bit, but it’s tied into my savings and there is much more than that in my savings.”

“And he’s rich, too!”



## Trapped – Chapter 4

“Not hardly; maybe comfortable. I’ll have George call and get the fuel tanks topped off. I need to go buy a chainsaw, spare parts and a wood splitter.”

After Glenda had told me that I only had a face cord of firewood, you may recall that I asked her to call around and lay in a two year supply for very cold weather. My thinking was that if I had the tools, we could get the help, or as last resort, learn to use them. Like any farm, we had acquired wagons and all it would take to make them horse drawn was harness, a different tongue and a seat. George had seen to the harness when he bought the saddles.

The whole idea of preparedness is being prepared, just in case. You might ask, “Just in case of what?” I’d say, “Just in case of anything, including WW III, Yellowstone going hot, mass starvation, a hurricane in downtown Los Angeles or an earthquake in Minneapolis.” You want more? Ok, how about chemical warfare, biological warfare, the H5N1 mutating to human transmission or the new super bug, invasive MRSA infections? MRSA has a little brother called MSSA.

So I asked her where she got the firewood and she gave me the number. I called and asked if they could deliver firewood beginning today and ending when they had supplied another 20 cords. The guy said for 20 cords, he’d put me at the top of the list and use a big truck. A pickup load of firewood is about 80ft<sup>3</sup>, while a cord is 128ft<sup>3</sup>. Don’t let them cheat you!

While our climate here was generally temperate bordering on subtropical year round, there was no end of things that could happen to change that. I didn’t believe anything Al Gore said, standing in the middle of a London snowstorm worrying about global warming. Hey, he’s made a good living preaching climate change; don’t knock it until you’ve tried it. I voted to Bush and have regretted every day since. I guess I could claim I was so young that I didn’t know any better. Gore wasn’t the answer and neither was John Kerry. I think I voted against them instead of for Bush.

In subtropical climates the winters are relatively warm, but not as hot as the summer season. These climates rarely – if ever – see frost or snow, and plants such as palm, citrus and many broadleaf evergreens flourish, in contrast to the hardier deciduous and coniferous trees which dominate mid-latitude climates. As one moves toward the tropical side the slight winter cool season disappears altogether, while at the polar threshold of the subtropics the winters become much cooler. With that in mind, buying firewood was nothing more than being prepared.

Besides getting the wood cutting tools, I needed spare parts for the generator, more filters and a few drums of oil. I told George to have them deliver 10 drums of 15w-40 with the diesel. I had Tom pick me up in one of the company trucks and I dropped him off. While the ladies went shopping, I did some of my own, writing checks because Glenda had the ATM card. We met up for lunch at Pizza Hut.

“How are you two doing?”

“We have the maternity wear and infant clothing out of the way. We’re not sure what to do about clothing for older kids.”

“Buy jeans; both boys and girls jeans when they’re for children over age 12, that’s about when they start making the girls jeans different. A clerk can set you straight. Buy universal cold weather clothing; I think there is a ski shop in town. You two know about undergarments, get an assortment, but avoid Victoria’s Secrets, they’re too expensive. There’s not a whole lot of difference between a blouse and a man’s shirt, some darts. You can add those to men’s shirts.”

“Do you have an answer for everything?”

“Nope, I just speak my mind. Who cares what side the buttons are on if the garment is functional? You can buy some fabric to make blouses from if you like, I don’t care. I’ll get you a sewing machine, if that’s ok.”

“Get a Brothers or a Viking. I get thread to go with the fabric. What we don’t get today, maybe we can get tomorrow.”

“Gottcha.”

I didn’t say what I thought, “If there is a tomorrow for us to shop.”

After lunch, I stopped by my lawyer’s office and laid out what I wanted and told him use forms, I needed it today. I pulled \$50,000 from my savings account leaving \$10,000 and purchased fractional Krugerrands at roughly \$900 an ounce. The gold market had been down, but today, it was back up. With the price of gold and silver high, the precious metal dealer was the loneliest guy in town. Before I returned home, I stopped by the lawyer’s office, signed the documents and took a notarized copy for me and left notarized copies for him to file or whatever.

“George, did you get everything done we needed?”

“Everything is topped off; there are 10 drums of oil in the machine shed. Did you get oil filters?”

“Damn.”

“No problem, sign a blank check and I’ll go. Fill in the name of the generator dealer. I’ll bring back your receipt; how many?”

“All you can get.”

As he sped out the driveway, the ladies came home. The back of the pickup was filled to nearly overflowing. We decided to pull the pickups into the machine shed and unload them later because everyone was exhausted. George was back in 45 minutes and we all sat back and had a cold one or two.

“Do you really think there is going to be a war?”

“I’ll answer that with a question; do you know who Jose Jimenez was? No? That was a character played by Bill Dana, a comedian. You’d know the name if you saw the movie ‘The Right Stuff’. Anyway, one of Bill’s masterful creations, Jose Jimenez (dressed as an astronaut) was once asked, ‘Is that a crash helmet?’ to which he replied, *I hope not*. I’ll say the same thing, *I hope not*. If it happens, it happens and it’s beyond our control. I’d say that we’re about as prepared as we can be. That said we have probably forgotten something.”

“They brought the firewood in by the dump truck load and dumped it. I told them we expected it to be stacked before we paid for it so we knew we didn’t get shorted. They brought two more loads and said they’d be back tomorrow to stack it.”

“Is any of it close to the back porch?”

“Some is, why?”

“Fill the back porch to the lid. Also stuff all you can get into the coal room. After I get done running errands tomorrow, I’ll come back and help.”

“Can I ask a question?”

“I try to answer, if I can.”

“You said to put the wood in the coal room. Why didn’t you buy coal?”

“George, check that, have them deliver coal tomorrow.”

If you hadn’t noticed, that was a whole lot of tomorrows. You remember *Tomorrow* right; it’s always a day away, according to Annie. The lyrics are:

*The sun’ll come out  
Tomorrow  
Bet your bottom dollar  
That tomorrow  
There’ll be sun!*

*Just thinkin’ about  
Tomorrow  
Clears away the cobwebs,*

*And the sorrow  
'Til there's none!*

*When I'm stuck a day  
That's gray,  
And lonely,  
I just stick out my chin  
And Grin,  
And Say,  
Oh!*

*The sun'll come out  
Tomorrow  
So ya gotta hang on  
'Til tomorrow  
Come what may  
Tomorrow! Tomorrow!  
I love ya Tomorrow!  
You're always  
A day  
A way!*

The ironic thing about Andrea McArdle, the first long running Annie, was that she was 11 years older than I am, 44. She was 11 when she had the Annie role and grew up good looking. I hoped it didn't rain nukes tomorrow. If they were moving their subs in closer, how long before they were in range to attack the entire US? Inquiring minds want to know! Oh well, I'll give you the answer. The distance from Los Angeles to New York is 3,961 km. Therefore, if they're within 4,000km off LA, they can hit the east coast, if that's what they plan.

If there is a WW III, you can blame it on Dubya wanting the farmers to produce crops for biofuels. Production of biofuels reduced the amount of grain the US could ship to other countries. It can therefore be explained by chaos theory or the *butterfly effect*. Chaos theory was in Jurassic Park. But wait, there's more... Unintended consequences are outcomes that are not (or not limited to) what the actor intended in a particular situation. The unintended results may be foreseen or unforeseen, but they should be the logical or likely results of the action. They are one result of the butterfly effect.

So we make alcohol and the weather isn't right in the far east and it adds up to hungry people all over the world. Who would have thunk? What's more, *Unintended Consequences* is a book by John Ross and all copies out on the internet are unauthorized illegal copies. I haven't read the book and would like to, but I'll respect his wishes. The downside of his posting that was people now knew it was out there.

The next morning, I took off in the company truck and George followed me with my now unloaded truck. Glenna and Stephanie said they unpack and sort everything. I bought her

the Brother Quilter, but only because the sales lady recommended it. There were still Glenda's car and Stephanie's car if they wanted to go shopping for anything they'd missed. The increased debit card limit automatically ended that previous night when the bank updated their computers, putting it back down to \$1,000. After we dropped the truck off, we stopped by a coal dealer and I gave the guy the dimensions of the coal room. He calculated the cubic feet and used a chart to determine the tonnage. He said it would be COD. Instead, I asked how much and wrote a check for the two loads he recommended. I thought about all of the preppers out there who knew what they needed to do, but lacked the money to accomplish.

Our next stop was Bob's where I got 10,000 rounds of .22LR, half HP and half solid and more 12 gauge shot in various sizes. I bought him out on .30-06 and any other caliber I had a firearm for. I was hoping that Glenda and Stephanie would be satisfied with HK 416s. However, Bob had 2 Browning's in the case along with and two M1A Loadeds in the rifle rack. The deciding factor was the fact that he also had two boxes of 20-round magazines and two of the 30 round magazines. He also had 10,000-rounds of that Lithuanian surplus and more M855 on stripper clips. I bought it all, called it a day and we returned to the farm. I think Bob closed up too.

The first load of coal had been delivered and was in the coal room and he was due back in about an hour. Two teenagers were staking the firewood and I asked George to get a tape measure and find out how much was stacked. He said 18 cords and it looked like there was more than 2 cords remaining to be stacked. I told him when he had the final count I'd write a check and pay for what they delivered, not for what I ordered. After sorting through their purchases, the ladies put most of them in Glenda's bedroom. Since we were married that freed the room up for storage. They had moved the bed to the basement and ask George and me to move the dresser, vanity and night stand.

Passing through the kitchen, I smelled something cooking and almost drooled. We decided to store all vehicles in the machine shed which was fully encased in galvanized metal. I wasn't sure it would work, but it was the best I could do to create a Faraday cage. The second load of coal arrived and wouldn't all fit in the coal room so we had him stack it close by and George and I covered it with a tarp which I used tent pegs to anchor to the ground. As I thought about it, the only things we didn't have were western hats, slickers and dusters. For that matter, neither did George or Stephanie.

It wasn't that we needed them, but after buying cowboy guns, horses, saddles, harnesses and scabbards, I wanted to complete the image. I estimated that a hat, slicker and duster could run \$450-\$500 per head. When I brought it up with the others, I got a quick mention about cowboy boots. I'd had a pair once and they positively killed my feet. Somewhere along the line I made a mistake in selecting those boots.

We had a western store in town; which allowed me to spend all the money in one place. We went the next morning as soon as the store opened and walked away with our cowboy suits and new boots. Then, we stopped by the office and Glenda did the payroll. I told Tom to pick up some cash and if TSHTF, give each employee \$1,000 cash so they

could buy things they might need. I figured that if TSHTF, some would suddenly realize what they needed and cash would be better than a check.

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“Worried about that China thing?”

“Yes, they’re starving and are a major nuclear power. If anyone needs an expedient shelter, take a crew and dig it. Do you have any way to seal them over?”

“Two layers of OSB, supported by metal posts. How much dirt do we put on top?”

“Make it 60”; it will give them a high protection factor. What are you doing today?”

“We didn’t have anything scheduled, we’re waiting on materials.”

“In that case, put in the shelters, the more people we can protect the better.”

“Where will you be?”

“We’ll be out at the farm. Now look Tom, with the equipment we have and available local materials, you can knock out those shelters fast. Tell everyone to use a fan to draw air through a furnace filter followed by a HEPA filter. They can pull the car batteries to power the fan and some 12v lights. Also tell them to plan on 343 hours closed up in the shelter. Buy those chemical toilets or whatever they need.”

“It’s just a shame we didn’t think to do this earlier.”

“My bad. You’d better get hopping.”

My bad – A way of admitting a mistake, and apologizing for that mistake, without actually apologizing. The best definition I ever read of this, now paraphrased: “I did something bad, and I recognize that I did something bad, but there is nothing that can be done for it now, and there is technically no reason to apologize for that error, so let's just assume that I won't do it again, get over it, and move on with our lives.”

Tick, the clock struck 1

At any given time, about half of our 14 SSBNs are at sea. In an extraordinary situation, one could envision all 14 as being at sea. The Ohio class is known for its stealth. The only quieter submarines are the Seawolf class and the Virginia class, both attack submarines. In addition to our SSBNs, we have 4 SSGNs, converted Ohio class subs that carry cruise missiles and SEAL teams. Some enterprising reporter for CNN did a special report stating unequivocally that all of our SSBNs, SSGNs and most of our attack class subs were underway. He went on to say that all ships of our ten strike groups that could

go to sea were nowhere to be found. Any cruiser or destroyer attached to a carrier undergoing a major overhaul had been reassigned to an active carrier strike group.

In high school, my history teacher talked about the Cuban Missile Crisis, an interest of his. He said it had been chilling to watch the situation develop and the government wasn't telling the American people much. The country made it to DEFCON 2 before Nikita blinked. He said we got lucky because the Russians had placed operational tactical nukes in Cuba and had we invaded, we'd have had WW III back then. This almost seemed to be the sequel; although, I half suspected that China wouldn't blink.

If they attacked, we'd retaliate, killing off a large portion of their population and solve their food shortage. The only way we could buy our way out of that happening, in my opinion, was to offer food; food that we couldn't spare for anyone. I had serious doubts we could buy enough rice on the open market to bribe the Chinese. It was generally in our character to turn the other cheek; we started out as a Christian nation. On the other hand, there's the Old Testament's an eye for an eye.

"There's not a lot we can do about the field crops if there's a war, Paul."

"How ample are those feed supplies you mentioned?"

"Nearly a year's worth."

"Any chance we could get more, just in case?"

"I think so. All I can tell you is; I'll try. Alfalfa may be the easiest, I know a guy who puts it up in small bales and has a lot. I'll call the elevator and see if they can deliver a few tons of their ground feed. We have a bunch of chickens; I'll try and get bagged feed for them."

"Let your fingers do the walking and try to do it all on the phone. You'll need to stay here and show everyone where to put the feed."

"I like that; it will keep me closer to Stephanie."

Glenda and I went back to watching the news which was disconcerting. There was, as the media is wont to do, a myriad of speculation. The consensus, if there was one, said to duck and cover. Many of the media outlets were actually bashing the US for creating nuclear weapons, for using them in WW II and for stockpiling them. Blitzer and Olbermann may have been the worst. I flipped the channel back to Fox News.

Over the course of the day, the farmer delivered two truckloads of hay, the grain elevator delivered a truckload of livestock feed and a truckload of COB and the feed and grain that sold chicken food delivered their load. George put down plastic to dump the livestock feed and COB on and topped it with more plastic and weights to keep it in place. The chicken feed went into the machine shed and the hay as added around the

chicken house and covered with plastic. I'd read a story on one of the sites mentioning the hay and plastic idea if you're wondering where George got the idea.

Tock, the clock stuck 0

We were just getting up from the dinner table when the EAS tone came over the TV. They said stay tuned for an announcement; we already knew what it would be and George and I put the last few hay bales in place and headed for the shelter to join our wives. Glenda had the old TV going because I'd had one of my guys run a cable from the house to the shelter.

The announcement was short and not so sweet, we were at DEFCON 1 with an Air Defense emergency and launches had been detected off the west coast that coincided with launches from mainland China. It would be raining nukes for at least an hour. You know which clock was ticking, don't you? The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists maintains what they call the Doomsday Clock, that's what clock, was ticking and the hands had finally reached midnight.

Fallout from China would affect Japan and Taiwan; fallout from the US would be carried east on the prevailing winds with some of it reaching Europe. Syria attacked Israel using Iranian weapons. Israel said to hell with it and nuked them both. The Saudis launched their three missiles and Israel went on a roll. The Middle East turned into a slag pile, as were China and the US. Israel was hit with nukes before they had a chance to attack Iraq or I'm sure they would have hit it too.

The White House had, unknown to us at the time, issued one last order recalling all of our foreign based troops. Right, snap you fingers and make it happen, in a pig's eye. If we could load them all on airliners with a capacity of 300, it would take around 434 just to bring home the troops from Iraq, plus another 67 to bring them home from Afghanistan. And, don't forget Japan and Korea and all those other places.

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Our city wasn't a target. We lay to the east of a large city that was a target. Fallout follows a definite pattern, a long and narrow path if the winds are high and a shorter, broader path if the winds are low. According to my remote sensing weather station, the wind was averaging 10mph and we wouldn't get fallout for 8 hours. George and I waited until we figured all the warheads that were going to fall had fallen and went out to make sure the livestock was well settled. The primary interest lay in providing enough feed for the chickens and making sure the automatic watering system was working.

We refilled the feed dispensers; giving them a 3 week feed supply. Our fruit and nut trees were going to take a beating and I hoped we could salvage some of the crop. I hadn't planted them, they came with the farm. We had three kinds of nuts, two kinds of apples, a peach and a pear tree. I realized that this wasn't the end, but the beginning of our efforts to survive. All that had passed before was preparation. It remained to be



seen if our preparations had been adequate or would be found wanting. My best guess was, adequate; with, perhaps a few holes to fill as the need arose. George had triple ordered seed at my direction and it was stored in the basement, a generally cool, dark place.

“The TV died.”

“The set or the feed?”

“The feed. I didn’t try any of the radios in case there is a late warhead and we’d get EMP.”

“Good thinking, Glenda. All the livestock is tended to and George can access the barn using the trench. I hated not doing it right, but it would have taken a week to construct a proper tunnel. We couldn’t get culvert in time and concrete would have taken too long to cure.”

“I should have thought of it, sorry.”

“What we have will work for now and if necessary, we can improve it later.”

“What’s in that box over there?”

“Millennium gas masks, with extra filters.”

“You do realize that without you having money and a company to run some of the expenses though, we wouldn’t have this, don’t you?”

“Just lucky, I guess. The money was fairly earned and I could have spent it other ways. I can think of several, a fancy car, an expensive boat up at the lake, a lakeside cabin, and fancy clothing.”

“Stephanie and I transferred the fresh food out of the refrigerator in the house while you guys were taking care of the livestock. You know, you can barely hear the generator on this side of the wall, that soundproofing was a good idea.”

“I wasn’t sure it would work, I’m happy it did. Once we hit the peak radiation level, I’ll be able to use that spreadsheet I got from TOM to calculate when we can leave. I’m glad now that I bought that CD.”

“He charged you for a spreadsheet?”

“No, it’s free for the asking. The CD has his and Fleataxi’s stories plus some others. Something to read and get ideas; not necessarily all good or practical, but they make you think.”

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A South Asian nuclear war would have global environmental consequences that could persist for a decade after the immediate carnage, according to a study published yesterday in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Using computer models of atmospheric dynamics, the US scientists found that large portions of the Earth's ozone layer would be destroyed following a 50-warhead exchange between India and Pakistan. Smoke from the detonations would foster chemical reactions in the upper atmosphere that would lead to problems back on the Earth's surface.

"We would see a dramatic drop in ozone levels that would persist for many years and it could have huge effects on human health and on our terrestrial, aquatic and marine environments," said research team leader Michael Mills of the University of Colorado at Boulder's Laboratory for Atmosphere and Space Physics. (From: Global Security Newswire)

The ozone losses predicted in the study are much larger than losses estimated in previous "nuclear winter" and "ultraviolet spring" scenario calculations following nuclear conflicts, said Toon, chair of CU-Boulder's oceanic and atmospheric sciences department. A 1985 National Research Council Report predicted a global nuclear exchange involving thousands of megatons of explosions, rather than the 1.5 megatons assumed in the PNAS study, would deplete only 17 percent of the Northern Hemisphere's stratospheric ozone, which would recover by half in three years. (From: Space War)

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We started to pick up fallout around eight hours later and it rose through the night. We peaked in the neighborhood of 238R/hr. If that spreadsheet was right, we'd be down here around 9 months. Around the time the chickens ran out of feed, we'd be down to roughly 1.9R/hr, low enough to risk a quick trip to the chicken house. That Tyvek suit and the gas mask would come in handy.

Ten years? Did I read that right? If it was 10 years for 50 weapons, what would it be for more? We'd been hit, I'd estimate, with anywhere from 72 to 172 weapons of varying sizes. Was our response triple redundant or 3:1? That would raise the total from anywhere from 288 to 688. And, there was that Trans-Pacific fallout that KI4U talked about. That didn't count the weapons that turned the Middle East into a slag pile. I wondered what Pakistan and India did; they had roughly 150 weapons between them.

## Trapped – Chapter 5

“Honey, I think you did the spreadsheet wrong.”

“What do you mean, I entered 238R.”

“True, but that was 8 hours after the fact according to your calculations. I did it the way TOM suggested and the original peak at the blast site was 3,000R. That coincides with 1.9R at 3 weeks later. Anyway, it means 9 months of shelter time to reach 94mR.”

“Are you sure?”

“Look for yourself.”

She was right, dammit. Nine months!

On another front, need I remind you that we two couples were recently married? I hadn't thought to put separate bedrooms in the shelter, having failed to see the need. It didn't take long for that to be a problem for all concerned. Simply turning out the lights wouldn't be enough, we need some privacy. I talked to George and we arrived at a solution, of sorts. It revolved around having access to the barn and gave the expression a roll in the hay real meaning. For the next 100 days, we took turns checking on the livestock in the barn and going as couples. It was beginning to appear that most problems have a solution. However, the women stopped taking their pills and before too long, were expecting. The radiation level was down to 300mR.

I've never described Glenda or Stephanie. Allow me to do that now. Glenda is about 5'6, 115 pounds (BMI18.6), medium length brunette hair and in rather good physical condition. Stephanie is 2 years older than Glenda, 5'7, maybe 118 pounds (BMI 18.5), with long blonde hair and is fuller in the chest, presumably without a padded bra. The hair must be natural, there are no roots showing and I haven't seen her bleach it. George and I are around 6', give or take an inch and in fairly good condition at 160 give or take (BMI 21.7), although he might be just a little more fit. We both have full heads of hair that I'd call brown. None of the four of us wears glasses, yet.

Speaking of George, when it comes to shooting, he's a natural. He says he learned it at a young age on the farm and the Army only improved it. He compared the HK 416s and HK417s to the M16s saying that someone had finally gotten it right. He'd never fired an M1A and said he was looking forward to it. The .223, he claimed, lacked oomph. I told him that I wished I could have gotten the military version with full auto.

“You mean you haven't looked at them?”

“Never took them out of the box until I got home and then, just put them in the cabinet.”

“Some guy in Virginia must be hurting about now.”

“Why?”

“Because he’s trying to find out what happened to two select fire weapons that went missing.”

“People don’t make mistakes like that!”

“You’d be surprised at some of the mistakes we saw every day in Logistics. Most of the time, they’re careful when it goes in the box matching the serial number on the box to the weapon inside, but mistakes happen. After that, they go by what’s on the box rather than looking inside. I’ve seen boxes marked A3 that contained A4s. There’s a significant difference, you know.”

“Let’s check the other 2.”

“Same thing. Now he’s up to his butt in alligators.”

That evening, Glenda and I entered the tunnel to go to the barn. For some reason, it had caved in, blocking the way. I figured the livestock had enough feed on hand to last until the next day and decided to let it go. I did, however, bring it up with George.

“The tunnel caved in.”

“Did you check the radiation level?”

“I didn’t have the CD V-715 with me, but my NukAlert didn’t go off.”

“We’ll open the blast door tomorrow and see about repairing the tunnel and feeding the livestock.”

“Ok, that sounds like a plan.”

The following morning we each dressed in a Tyvek suit and donned gas masks. I turned the wheel on the door but it wouldn’t open.

“Let me try.”

“Uh, there is something up against the door; it won’t budge.”

“Until we can figure how to get out of here, I guess we’re trapped.”

“Exactly what happened to the tunnel Paul?”

“I couldn’t tell for sure, but it appears that it must have rained and the water undermined one side of the plate, tipping it into the trench.”

“And the four feet of soil on the plate fell into the hole?”

“Yes, it’s blocked.”

“Do you have a shovel in the shelter?”

“No. Wait, I have an entrenching tool.”

“Have you ever used an entrenching tool?”

“No, I bought it for emergencies.”

“I’d say this qualifies as an emergency. Before we start, how do you propose to repair the tunnel?”

“Use some of the 4x6s in the machine shed and lay the plate on top. You’ll have to mount the backhoe to remove the soil from the trench and the loader to dump it back on.”

“How much radiation are we going to pick up?”

“Probably not more than 3-4R; the suits and gas masks will help a lot.”

“It’s going to depend on how long it takes for us to dig through; that’s why I asked if you’d ever used an entrenching tool. You don’t move much dirt at a time, although it being loose will help.”

“Fine. The tool I have is the model 1943 WW II or Korean surplus, the one with the long handle. I liked it because the handle was longer.”

“With or without the pick?”

“Without.”

“Where is it?”

“In my BOB on top of the cabinet.”

It took George and me four hours to dig our way out of the tunnel. A large branch had broken off a tree and wedged itself against the blast door. We moved it, planning to cut it up later for firewood. We mounted the back hoe and the loader and I hauled the timbers while George dug out the trench. We wrapped a log chain around the plate, lifted it from the trench and finished excavating. Next, we laid the timbers down and lifted the plate back over the trench. Finally, we used the loader to pile the soil back on the plate.

Plus, we fed the livestock. It was a good thing we had plenty of hay. Otherwise we'd end up with Strontium-90 in the milk when the cow came in.

Since horses should be fed constantly instead of twice a day, there were frequent trips to the barn to add small amounts of feed or hay. George explained that a horse has a small stomach for an animal of its size and are less likely to get colic if they're fed often in small amounts. Do ask me, I'm a city boy. They will eat whatever you put in front of them; hence you must control the feed.

We were about 3½ months into our stay and with both wives expecting, I usually carried the CD V-715 with me. I hadn't the one time there was a danger of radiation, when the tunnel collapsed. What is the opposite of being trapped? Being un-trapped or free? Around thirty days, Glenda began picking up hams from around the country and making notes. She slowly developed a list of cities that the Chinese attacked. East coast: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Jacksonville and Miami. Mid east: Detroit, Columbus, Chicago, Indianapolis, Nashville (our strike), Tuscaloosa, Little Rock and Memphis. Midwest: Minneapolis, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Kansas City. Further west: Cheyenne, Denver, Colorado Springs, Albuquerque, Tucson and Phoenix. Far west: Great Falls, Boise, Salt Lake City, Reno, Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and Spokane.

She was able to pick up BBC on one of the other receivers and they described both China and the Middle East as *glowing parking lots*. India and Pakistan had gone at it too. The temperatures, they said were falling rapidly and they expected an extended *Nuclear Winter*. Forces from the UK and France were helping evacuate American troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. All troops, from every nation, were out of Afghanistan and fewer than 20,000 foreign troops remained in Iraq. They had no comments about troops in other countries. As long as our generator kept running, that wouldn't be a problem; I had one of my guys install heat tapes on every pipe. It was the kind that got warmer as the temperature fell, called self-regulating.

You've heard the Fram commercial they used to run that said, "Pay me now or pay me later"? A prepared person would have considered the possibility of a Nuclear Winter and prepared accordingly. Which is cheaper, a little self-regulating heat tape and insulation or broken pipes? Mobile home owners in the colder climates know all about heat tapes, it's almost life or death to them. It rained but we didn't have snow, yet. I check the house and although it was nearly freezing, we had running water.

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A story has three parts, before, during and after. I think I pretty well explained about Glenda and me, how we met, the stages of our relationship and where George came from. George found Stephanie and I don't have the story on that. I got spooked by a bunch of things and took things into my own hands trying to prepare. My money let me do it rather well. However, my business is gone at least for now; I still owe the bank a

bunch of money on this place and with no more livestock than we have, building a cattle herd will take a while.

On the other hand, the freezers were nearly full, there was more than enough food and we had a means of self-protection should we need it. My pickup and car are both gasoline powered and had computers and I didn't have spares. One of us should have thought of that, but it was spilt milk and when I checked, they both started. I didn't let them run long enough to see if the engines would smooth out.

I wish now that I'd seen that article from Global Security Newswire earlier; I could have built a greenhouse. Glenda and I discussed that and her response was, "Oops!" Since our community hadn't been hit, there was a chance I might be able to find some Lexan or Plexiglas and construct one. Lexan is similar to Plexiglas and is commonly described as acrylic in appearance, but is far more durable, often to the point of being described as *bulletproof*.

While I haven't said where we live, I've given you enough information that you can easily figure it out, if you really want to know. If you need help, get it from one of those TTU students. The city I lived in is on I-40 and the farm is about 15 minutes out of town. It's mostly hilly around here and farming isn't easy, but it's tillable – if you're a Billy goat. Glenda and George were raised on a farm in the state northwest of us.

When Glenda suggested another CD V-742, I bought two from KIU4 plus 6 bottles of  $\text{KIO}_3$  from Medical Corps.org. The principle isotopes from Chernobyl were Strontium-90, Cesium-137, Thallium-201 and Iodine-131. The only known treatment for the Cesium and Thallium is Prussian Blue, produced in Germany and marketed in the US under the name Radiogardase® and I couldn't locate a source although it has been sold in the US since 2003. The FDA says, "Prussian blue is available only by prescription and should be given only under the supervision of a physician after assessing your medical condition. It is only effective to treat contamination with radioactive cesium or thallium. The dose and duration of treatment depends on the amount of contamination a person is exposed to. This drug should be given only when the physician has determined your need for it."

"When are we going to get out of this place?"

"According to the spreadsheet, after 200+ days have passed. However, residual radiation will affect your babies so I'm limiting you to no more than 12-hours a day above ground until the radiation level falls to 50mR."

"When will that be?"

"Figure 9 months."

"WHAT? NINE MONTHS? IN A PIG'S EYE!"

“Yelling at me won’t change fact that the radiation could harm our baby.”

“Damn.”

“I think that’s the first time I’ve heard you cuss.”

“I can do it again; I know quite a few cuss words.”

“I’m sure you do, however, it won’t change anything. George and I will sleep down here to keep you company. I sure wish we had a guard dog.”

“What breed?”

“German Shepherd.”

“Once you’re out, go look for one. Buying dog food may be the last thing on people’s minds. Try to get one old enough to be of some use.”

It was just short of 265 days when the CD V-717 read 100mR. I double checked with the V-715 and I told everyone they could come up for a while. I offered George and Stephanie a choice between the HK416, HK417 or a M1A and a Browning apiece. Glenda and Stephanie went home and began cleaning up immediately. She said she didn’t want leftover fallout in her house. We let the animals out to the feedlot and let the chickens run loose. There were a number of chicks, but they were partially offset by the number of dead chickens.

I fired up my car and pickup plus Glenda’s car and let them idle. George did the same with his pickup. The engines eventually settled out meaning we had transportation. It was colder than a witch’s whatever. I tried to call town, but the phone was down. I told the ladies that George and I were going to town to pick up a few things. I checked the lumberyard and got what Plexiglas they had in stock. I asked if they knew where I could get Lexan and they recommended I try the glass store.

I got all we could in town then went to a hardware store to get screws. I asked how long they’d been open since we’d been attacked was told about 4 weeks. I later checked the spreadsheet and hoped they slept in a shelter or they might overdose on radiation. I concluded, and George agreed, it wasn’t our problem and we’d only say something if we were asked.

The lumberyard allowed me to charge the purchase to my business, but the glass store wouldn’t and I had to pay them in cash. When we got home, we unloaded the truck and stored the plastic panels in the machine shed. We need some kind of framing to mount the panels to so I checked my supply of 2x4s. I wasn’t sure we’d have enough, but we could start and go back to the lumberyard for more.



With two of them working, they had the house clean by the time we returned. I checked our dosimeters and suggest they call it a day. We'd get the livestock back in the barn and shoo the chickens back in the chicken house. After we'd fed them, we cleaned up and returned to the shelter. That little oven in the 4-way was cranked up to maximum and the ladies were cooking pizza. They had cold beer from the basement to go with it.

"I don't know about trying to assemble a greenhouse now, it's pretty cold out, Paul."

"There isn't much sunlight either George, it will keep. I just wanted the alternative so we could grow some food."

"What about the livestock?"

"We'll graze the horses and feed the hay to the cattle. We'll need to check around and see if anyone else has hay for sale, I don't want radioactive isotopes in the milk."

"What radioactive isotopes?"

"Strontium-90, Stephanie; it wouldn't be good for anyone; it replaces calcium in bones and can cause cancer. For that matter, so can too much radiation and George and I are going to sleep down here too."

"Why are we taking the pills," Stephanie asked.

"They load your thyroid with iodine so it can't absorb radioactive iodine. It's more a product from reactors, but you can never be too careful," Glenda explained.

"You said 9 months? Earlier you said 265-days and before that, 90 days."

"I made a miscalculation. The 265-day mark puts the fallout level at 100mR, Stephanie. To really avoid problems, I deemed it appropriate to not stay out until it's half of that. It's important for everyone's health, especially the babies. However, the fallout won't reach 50mR until after the babies come so you're going to get out earlier. The fallout continues to decay under the seven-ten rule, so our exposure will be lessened as time passes. I checked the spreadsheet to see when it would fall to zero and would you believe it says 8,252 years? I don't believe any of us will be around to see that happen unless one of you is named Methuselah."

"But we can remove some of the fallout, right?"

"Yes we can. We should have help because I told Tom to throw together expedient shelters for my employees and give them enough cash to buy emergency supplies. I don't know how they spent the money, but I hope some of them took it to heart and did what they should to survive."

"You did that because you're a good employer?"

“I did it in enlightened self-interest. We have a lot to do, including assembling a greenhouse.”

“I see, prepare for the worst and hope for the best?”

“More or less; while I’m thinking of it, don’t say anything about the mix-up on those HK416s and HK417s. While Tennessee allows you to own a machinegun, they have to be registered with the BATFE and these aren’t.”

“Somehow Paul, I think they’re the least of our worries.”

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“May I ask a question?”

“Sure, I answer it the best I can.”

“Were all of your preparations geared towards WW III?”

“Oh, an easy one; the answer is no, they were directed towards any calamity including, but not limited to, WW III. You’ll have to admit that the shelter makes a good tornado shelter too. Some of the preps are as much geared to food shortages as they are to WW III. Have you followed commodity prices? Rice, wheat and corn was in short supply pushing the price very high. I half believe that it caused China to go to war with us.”

“That’s counter-intuitive.”

“Think about it, they attack us and they lose maybe 50% of their population. That leaves more food to go around for the survivors. You don’t think the leaders were sitting out in the middle of Tiananmen Square with their arms open trying to catch our warheads, do you?”

“And where is Russia in all of this?”

“I don’t know, but if the information your sister has been getting off the radio is accurate, they didn’t take part. I don’t know if China launched on them or not; if they did, I’m sure Russia retaliated. I also believe that we didn’t launch on anyone without a reasonable degree of certainty about who was attacking. NORAD had to know it was the Chinese with BMEWS. While our policy is launch on warning, we have to determine who to launch against.”

“So no first strikes?”

“The side that launches a well-coordinated first strike can pin down the retaliatory forces of the other country by launching a barrage of submarine based missiles from close

range, in a fast depressed trajectory mode, and exploding the warheads every minute or so at high altitudes over the ICBM fields of the targeted country, using a technique called X-ray pin-down. This makes it impossible to launch the ICBMs without damaging their navigation systems for as long as the high-altitude detonations continue. This buys extra time for the wave of first strike ICBMs to complete their flights and hit their targets, which are the ICBMs that have been pinned down in their silos. This greatly shortens the effective warning time for the President to make his decision to launch a retaliatory strike while still under attack. It takes a few minutes to confirm launch detection from early warning systems, and another few minutes for ICBMs to complete their launch procedures, and then a bit more for them to clear the region of X-ray pin-down, and that squeezes the decision time from both ends of the schedule. Alternatively, submarines could launch a depressed-trajectory strike against the capital of the targeted country, in an effort to destroy its command structure before any retaliatory decision could be made.”

“Is that what China tried?”

“I think so; I’m not sure. If they launched at maximum range with their subs, NORAD and BMEWS may have provided sufficient warning for the initial EAS message. With us not waiting to hear what they were going to tell us, we made it in the shelter before the warhead hit Nashville.”

“Why would they hit Nashville?”

“Maybe they don’t like Country Music? I have no idea. The Metropolitan area is about a million and a half and it is the state capital.”

Until we reached the twelve-month point after the attack, we stayed close to home only venturing out to buy a few available things and sell our eggs to one of the markets. I contacted Tom and explained that while I didn’t have sufficient power for the entire staff, and didn’t have housing, they were free to move to the farm if they wanted. They would need to provide their own housing and probably their own electrical supply. He said he would check with them and let me know what they wanted to do. He’d have to talk it over with his family before he decided.

“At least with them not hitting our city, we’ll have medical care available when it’s needed.”

“Won’t that depend on how many of the healthcare workers survived?”

“Of course, but they make up roughly 12% of the population, and all we need is a doctor and/or nurse.”

“Stephanie and I need to get in to see a doctor soon, pre-natal care is important.”

“You’ve been taking those pre-natal vitamins, haven’t you?”

“Yes we have and I don’t believe we have any problems. Believing and knowing isn’t the same thing Paul.”

“With no phone, we’ll just have to go to town and try and get a walk-in visit.”

“Or, make an appointment. Say, we have radios in all of the trucks and in the office. How much trouble would it be to move them out here?”

“It would be easier if we could get the radio shop to move them, but no trouble. Why would we want to do that?”

“Semi-secure communications; we have the ham radio and those FRS/GMRS hand held radios, but they don’t have the range of the 45-watt business radios.”

“Why semi-secure?”

“You can pick them up with a scanner; I know because I tried. While no other business radio can pick them up unless they have the same privacy settings, scanners don’t have privacy settings.”

It wasn’t long before a travel trailer or two and a motor home or two showed up at the farm. They had built in generators but would need access to a dump site for their waste system. We’re not talking large living spaces, either; by law, a travel trailer is limited to 400ft<sup>2</sup> not counting pull outs. The largest trailer belonged to Tom and he asked how big my septic system was. I had no idea and only knew that it had been pumped out when I bought the place. We had a tank in stock about motel size and the drains that went with it. They were for a project that hadn’t been started before the attack.

Our ground wasn’t frozen deep and he and the others replaced the old tank and expanded the drain field. They then routed a sewer line out to the area where the trailers were parked and a water line as well. The trailers were connected directly to water, sewer and propane eliminating their mobility. Our local propane supplier is AmeriGas and they were persuaded to install a 1,100-gallon tank.

With more hands to help, the residual fallout was gathered up and removed to a small ravine and covered over with fresh soil. Next, they erected the greenhouse and installed fluorescent fixtures, mixing warm white and cool white bulbs. A kerosene heater provided warmth. Thirteen months into the after and there wasn’t enough sunshine to grow plants. A local Wal-Mart provided growing mix and pots and they started the assortment of plants from one of the cans I’d gotten from Ark Institute.

We shared a portion of the food I had put up and I was very grateful I had bought the deluxe packages from Walton Feed. Some of my employees had the good sense to spend the grand on food, meaning they were not totally dependent. Most of the men

hunted and had at least a shotgun or center fire rifle. Tom's gun collection was larger than mine, but I had more ammo.

"Are you sure it was a good idea to turn the horses out, Paul?"

"No, Tom, I'm not sure but George didn't have a major problem with it. We have been looking for more hay without much luck. Those piles of feed should see us through at least a year according to him. I don't want the cattle eating anything except stored grain and hay and the hogs to eat anything except stored grain. It's time to butcher chickens and freeze them, is there anyone of the guys with any experience?"

"I'll ask around, I'm sure some have some."

The problem with growing chickens in the after part of WW III is that they go from a chick to a broiler in about 7 weeks. Our chickens were 13 months, not weeks old. The flock had probably tripled or quadrupled because it only takes 21 days to incubate an egg and you know how roosters are...

## Trapped – Chapter 6

We had almost too much chicken for our storage space. Not counting the four of us, the farm was up to ten families and I hoped they liked chicken. On top of that, the sow had farrowed producing a litter of 14 pigs. George and I had castrated the barrows and we planned to find a boar to breed the sow and gilts. The feeder cattle were a bit short of butchering size and the calf had a year to go. However, we now had fresh milk, around six gallons a day.

It hadn't taken long for the grocery stores to run out of food. My last purchase was 6 50-pound bags of dog food for the German Shepherd (Rex) we'd acquired. Glenda had been right; people didn't want to buy dog food and were giving them away. She was working on training him and had him house broke. Tom and the others suggested maintaining a guard detail because with 12 families here, we obviously had food. How long would it be before someone comes looking with an eye to taking, he wondered.

"Tom I don't have an answer, probably not long."

"Well, don't you think we should prepare ahead of time? I can share some of my rifles with those that only have shotguns. What do you have for guns?"

"One Tac-50, 4 M1As, 2 590A1s, 2 HK416s, 2 HK417s, 2 Taurus PT1911s, 4 Browning Hi-Power Classics, a Taurus .22 pump, an 870 12-gauge and a Winchester model 70 .30-06. On top of that, we have Ruger single action revolvers in .45 Colt, Marlin's in .45 Colt and .45-70.

"How are you on ammo?"

"I literally have a ton of ammo. There are some other things too, but I hesitate to say too much."

"I got some M67s and some LAW rockets from an Army guy in supply. Never saw his face. I also picked up some NATO ammo, 7.62 and 5.56; not a lot, though."

"You got it from me Tom," George said.

"You're not in the Army."

"I'm not in the Army now. I had a drug habit and sold supplies as I could get away with it to get drug money. I overdosed and ended up getting booted. Do you want to tell him the rest Paul?"

"I bought a few things from George too, although I didn't know he was Glenda's brother. In fact, I thought he was her boyfriend. I have 30 LAW rockets, 150 grenades, and some of the HEIAP sniper ammo."

“We need to pull the business radio from the company vehicles.”

“All we need is cannons,” Tom laughed.

“Don’t laugh, Bob offered me a M198.”

“Was he serious?”

“I doubt it; however, you never know.”

“Glenda said something about the UK and France helping with our troops.”

“She picked that up on BBC. All foreign troops were out of Afghanistan and at that time, only 20,000 or so remained in Iraq.”

“Israel didn’t nuke Iraq?”

“Apparently not; if they did, they’d be cutting off their nose to spite their face.”

“Is that true now? I mean, since we got nuked, what do they have to lose?”

“She didn’t tell you about our naval forces?”

“What about them?”

“Anything that could sail did. Cruisers and Destroyers attached to the Carrier undergoing overhaul were reassigned.”

“Do you have any idea which carrier was being overhauled?”

“Not really, either the Stennis or the Washington. They have to refuel them around 25 years and they take around three years by the time they’ve made all of the upgrades.”

“That’s damned odd; do you know how long it takes to prepare a carrier to sail?”

“I’m not a sailor.”

“Around three months, Paul. They have to put a bunch of stores aboard, round up the personnel, it’s not simple.”

“How about an emergency sortie?”

“With CVNs, they can do it, but they’d have to resupply in a hurry. If they had any reason to believe the war was coming, they could have been working overtime to get the strike groups ready to sail.”

“You know that the Chinese Navy left port ahead of the attack, allegedly to protect their fleet.”

“Our satellites would have seen them making ready to sail; maybe the government used that as a cue and did the same thing.”

“You’re attributing a lot of intelligent thinking to our government that I don’t see much evidence of Tom. If they knew that, why not issue a warning to the population?”

“Not every employer gave their employees a grand to buy supplies. Most grocery stores only have a three day supply of food. What would have happened if every employer had been like you; and the people took the warning seriously?”

“Maybe a run on the grocery stores?”

“Food riots more likely.”

“Back to the subject at hand; what about maintaining a sentry?”

“Work something out and include George and me. If we’re going to keep a sentry, we’d better do it 24/7.”

“Are there enough radios to go around?”

“If you mean of all the same kind, no. There are a dozen FRS/GMRS radios plus the ham radios and the business radios in our vehicles.”

“Where did you get yours?”

“Glenda got them, but I can tell you they’re Motorola 9500XLR. They don’t work as far as claimed, but they’re good enough for the farm. I think she may have gotten them at Radio Shack, but you can ask her. Do you want me to get some more?”

“Everyone should have a radio so I’d say we need at least a dozen more.”

“I’ll take care of it.”

I told Glenda George and I had to go to town for more FRS radios and she said to go to Radio Shack. When I got there, they were locked up tight. The emergency number on the door didn’t help because there were no phones. George let himself in the back door and whistled at me to join him.

“How many?”

“Maybe we’d better get all they have.”



“That’s 12 pairs at \$60 a pair.”

“I wonder if they’ll take a check. No, I’d better leave cash. A thousand should cover it including sale tax; or, be close enough.”

“Want some CBs?”

“What do they have?”

“A good assortment with three or four of each model; some are mobile and some are handheld.”

“Antennas?”

“Enough for all the radios they have.”

“Might as well I guess. I don’t have enough cash, though.”

“Come back and pay them when the store is open.”

“I don’t do things that way, George.”

“Really? Do you know how much the government pays for one LAW rocket?”

“1,500?”

“Just under \$2,500; you can’t buy grenades for three bucks either. That Raufoss runs \$7.50 a round or \$900 a can.”

“How about I leave all the cash I have and we take what we want?”

“That makes more sense. It beats looting and calling it salvaging.”

I looked closer and found two folded hundreds, my emergency money, and left \$1,200.

“Did you get what you wanted?”

“And more. I need to carry more cash, even if it isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Radio Shack was closed, so we opened it. We got 2 dozen of the Motorola radios and then the subject of CBs came up. They had about four of each model and antennas.”

“And???”

“They’re in the pickup. I left all the money I had on me, \$1,200.”

“You’ve got to watch that, once you start, it’s like eating peanuts and you can’t stop.”

“Think I should get money out of the safe and take some back to town?”

“Well... dinner is ready.”

Glenda begged the question and I was worried about going back and getting caught in the store. Not up to my usual standards, but just this one time, I’d let it go for now. I figured there would be a way to work it out. I wasn’t worried about the National Guard showing up because the war in Iraq and Afghanistan had stretched the reserves to the breaking point. One report I read months ago claimed that so much equipment had to be pulled from the reserves to meet obligations in Iraq and Afghanistan that the reserves only had 61% of the equipment they were required to have.

“Glenda, did BBC say where they were taking the troops?”

“No, just that they were being evacuated.”

“I suppose they had to leave their equipment.”

“They didn’t say. Can you answer a question for me?”

“I’ll try, what do you what to know?”

“We were in the shelter on November 4<sup>th</sup>, so we didn’t get to vote. We didn’t come out to stay for 9 months. Who is President?”

“I don’t know. All the members of the House were up for election, one-third of the Senate was and so were the president and vice president. I’d guess that it would be up to Governors to appoint legislators, assuming the governor wasn’t up for election. All you would have left is two-thirds of the Senate. You know what honey, it doesn’t matter; they’re all about the same. Maybe Chertoff will proclaim himself President.”

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In 2003, the Continuity of Government Commission, a private nonpartisan think tank, suggested that the current law has "at least seven significant issues... that warrant attention," including:

1. The reality that all figures in the current line of succession work and reside in the vicinity of Washington, DC. In the event of a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that everyone on the list would be killed or incapacitated.

2. Doubt (such as those expressed above by James Madison) that Congressional leaders are eligible to act as President.
3. A concern about the wisdom of including the President pro tempore in the line of succession as the "largely honorific post traditionally held by the longest-serving Senator of the majority party." For example, from January 20, 2001 to June 6, 2001, the President pro tempore was 98-year-old Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.
4. A concern that the current line of succession can force the presidency to abruptly switch party's mid-term, as the Speaker and the President Pro Tempore are not necessarily of the same party as the President.
5. A concern that the succession line is ordered by the dates of creation of the various executive departments, without regard to the skills or capacities of the persons serving as their Secretary.
6. The fact that, should a cabinet member begin to act as President, the law allows the House to elect a new Speaker (or the Senate, a new President pro tempore), who could in effect remove the cabinet member and assume the office him- or herself at any time.
7. The absence of a provision where a President is disabled and the Vice Presidency is vacant (for example, if an assassination attempt simultaneously wounded the President and killed the Vice President).

To avoid an unprecedented situation, the government specifically makes sure that there are no situations in which the President and all of the potential successors are present in the same place. For gatherings like the State of the Union Address, one eligible cabinet member is selected and is hidden in an undisclosed location elsewhere. Thus, if for whatever reason catastrophe struck the Capitol, there would still be a person – the designated – to assume the presidency.

There are no explicit provisions for what would happen if everyone on the list were dead, unable to serve, or otherwise ineligible to assume the Presidency. Deputy Secretaries would not be eligible, as the line of succession only applies to full Cabinet members. In the event of the death of their superior, deputy secretaries only assume the responsibilities as acting secretary – positions that are not counted in the line of presidential succession. If Congress were still able to convene, then the House could elect a new Speaker or the Senate could elect a new President pro tempore who would then immediately act as President. However, this could be dangerously time consuming during a national emergency, and would be delayed even further if the crisis left both houses of Congress without a quorum to fill those key leadership positions, requiring special elections to fill seats in the House of Representatives or state gubernatorial appointments to replace Senators. This possibility has caused some discussion on constitutional or legal remedies, although no formal action has been taken.

The answer is: there is no answer. Check it out, it's true.

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I put what I figured I owed them in an envelope and planned to slip it under the door next time I was in town. Considering everything, we probably should have just taken the stuff. If the store manager showed up and found the merchandise missing, he'd like as not pocket the cash and report the burglary. Nobody was going to care; the insurance companies wouldn't be paying off any claims. I wanted a clear conscience, just in case.

"I've got the general schedule made up for sentry duty. I figure two on a team and each team will have one shift a day. We have 12 people, or 6 teams of two, and can run 4 hour shifts. Since you're the owner of this place, I'm giving you first choice."

"I take George and ask him which shift we want. I'll get back to you in 30 minutes."

"George, Tom gave me first pick for sentry duty. We're running 6 teams of two with four hour shifts. What shift do you want?"

"Noon until 4? That wouldn't interfere with tending the stock."

"I tell him. You want a HK417 or a M1A?"

"Well, I'd prefer the M1A, BUT, one of us has to have full-auto so I'll take the HK417."

"What about the LAWs and grenades?"

"I'd suggest one LAW and two grenades each. Did you ask Glenda to get all of those FRS radios charged and set to the same frequencies?"

"Hadn't thought of it; I'll tell Tom which schedule we want and help her get the radios set up."

"I've noticed that you're forgetful and sometimes just don't think of things. What's the deal with that?"

"I'm new to this and didn't serve in the military. What's second nature to most you that have served or have been prepping a long time is mostly new to me. I've done my best to prepare, but you're going to have to bear with me. Hell, I don't even know how to ride a horse."

"Are you scared of horses?"

"Big animal."

"Don't let them know you're scared or you be in for one wild ride. They can smell it so you're going to have to pick a filly and get to know her. I'll break them to saddle but it

won't be like you see in the movies, I'll go slow and gentle. Did you see *The Horse Whisperer*?"

"Robert Redford?"

"Yep. More like the Indian way of breaking a horse."

"Anything else I need to know about horses?"

"If we're not careful with their diet, they get frisky."

"You handle that and if any other the others were raised on a farm get them to help. You know about the cowboy guns?"

"Only that you bought some, Glenda mentioned it." The holsters are the Laredoan and the revolvers are original model Ruger Vaquero .45 Colt, all 4 barrel lengths. The rifles are Marlin 1894 Cowboys in .45 Colt and 1895 Cowboys in .45-70. We have the scabbards too. I'll get the scabbards rigged, did you buy saddle bags?"

"I don't believe Glenda ordered them."

"I got them with the saddles, I was making sure we didn't duplicate."

"When you have time, you might want to look into making a wagon tongue for the horses and seat for us to ride on."

"I will, the only thing that might be a problem is figuring out a brake. I'll come up with something. Is this a low priority or a high priority?"

"Low, we have plenty of gas and diesel."

"Have you stuck the diesel tank?"

"No, why?"

"You might want to reorder; it's been running six months and only been shut down for oil changes. I'd say it's down 5,000-gallons."

"But George, we started with 80,000-gallons."

"I don't believe the price will go any way but up."

"Drive into town and ask them bring out 5,000-gallons of diesel, top off the gas and the propane and get another load of coal. We can always find a way to pump the gas out of the company tank, that's 10,000-gallons, more or less. I have Plenty of PRI-D and PRI-G. If necessary, we can use kerosene for anti-gel."

“What about those 2 motor home owners? They can’t get around without hitching a ride with someone.”

“We can take them to town and they can either pick up their personal vehicles or use one of the company pickups. I would have thought that we’d have heard from more of my employees.”

“Ask Tom, he might know better than I would.”

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“Do you have any idea why so few employees have turned up?”

“Some of them didn’t want shelters because they said they were bugging out. A couple had shelters and extensive preparations; I guess you must have rubbed off on them. As far as the others go, I simply don’t know. If they took my warning to heart, they spent the money at the grocery store and may still have some food. I wouldn’t think that likely, a grand worth of food doesn’t last long.”

“Mind if I ask what you did with your money?”

“I figured the lights would be the first thing to go so I couldn’t buy fresh or frozen meat. The wife suggested going for shelf stable foods; you know, beans, rice, pasta, sauces, canned meat like Spam, tuna and so forth. We’ve eaten a whole lot of macaroni and cheese lately. We had some camping gear to use in the shelter and mostly got by. Didn’t have a survey meter, but I had a NukAlert, so I knew when it was relatively safe to come out. Some of those missing people, by the way, may have come out after two weeks; you can’t smell, see or feel radiation.”

“I was afraid of that when I said two weeks. At 8 hours, the level was only down to 238R per hour. They’d pick up a lethal dose in two days.”

“Can’t be helped Paul, everyone should have known of the threats we faced and given them some consideration. If nothing else, they should have educated themselves on what to do. Duck and cover my butt; if you’re that close, you’re dead meat. It wasn’t your responsibility to do their thinking.”

“Do you know anything about butchering?”

“Nothing, but I know where to go to get butchering done. There’s a guy who processes beef and chicken over in Monterey. Don’t know about hogs, though.”

“My father used to talk about how it was back in the 1950s. It seems like every town had a Creamery and a Locker Plant that butchered, cut and wrapped meat.”

“They did things differently sixty years ago, that’s for sure.”

“We’re going to be doing things that way again, mark my words.”

“If and when our vehicles stop running, it’s going to a whole further back than the 1950’s. More like turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. Those fillies bred?”

“Glenda suggested we wait until they were four.”

“If it were me, I do that the next time they come in heat, it’s usually in spring. The gestation period is almost a year and while you can train them to saddle or harness beginning at age two, they aren’t mature enough to use much before age four.”

“Building a herd is a long term process?”

“Starting with four mares and shopping around for different stallions for breeding purposes, you could increase your herd to double the first year. You can rebreed her on her foal heat if:

- a. You want her to foal earlier next year.
- b. She had no problems foaling this year.
- c. The stallion will not be available for breeding in a few more weeks.
- d. Your mare only foals every other year even though you breed her every year.”

“Will I have to pay a bunch of stud fees?”

“Not unless you’re into a specific breeding program. If you are, expect stud fees for \$1,000 to \$4,000. You could buy a Morgan stallion and do a little inbreeding. Morgan’s were a good choice; they live around 30 years and are generally easy to care for. Are yours registered?”

“I didn’t get papers, so I’d guess probably not.”

“Hopefully by the time our vehicles give up the ghost, you’ll have a herd of horses for us to ride.”

“Paul, they didn’t want to deliver fuel but I persuaded them. They don’t have any gasoline available. AmeriGas will top off the tank and add a second as a rental. The guy said when their propane is gone; they don’t know whether they’ll get more, more than likely not. I went by the office and checked, we have a pump we can use to pump gas or a generator to supply power to your dispenser. It looks to me like someone tried to break in and couldn’t.”

“Somehow, the pigeons always come home to roost. We hit Radio Shack and someone tried to hit us. I think we’d better move our equipment and hand tools out here before someone succeeds in breaking in.”

## Trapped – Chapter 7

I realized that if the cow didn't birth a heifer, I was going to need to find some for sale. One beef yields enough meat for approximately 12 people for a year. That's not counting pork, chicken and fish. I guessed I should have purchased more than the bred milk cow and two feeders. The average person eats 60 pounds of beef, 50 pounds of pork, 60 pounds of chicken, 15 pounds of turkey and 15 pounds of fish a year, or so I'd read. Counting kids, we had 44 people and would need to butcher 4 head of beef, 22 hogs, almost 900 chickens and 44 turkeys. If they wanted fish, they knew where the lake was. We had 2 beef to butcher, 20 hogs, 600 chickens give or take and no turkeys.

"I sat down and figured out how many livestock we need to feed everyone for a year and we're way short."

"What are we short on?"

"We need 2 more beefs, 2 hogs, around 600 chickens and 44 turkeys with an average weight of 15 pounds."

"Don't you know where to get more?"

"I got the cow and feeder cattle at the livestock auction. I got hogs from a neighbor and you got the chickens. I'm not worried about chickens it's 21 days incubation and 7 weeks until butchering, if we have enough feed. We added 19 gilts to the hog herd and will be okay there too with twice a year breeding. We need some turkeys, either butchered or to butcher plus some to raise. I'd like to buy 5-6 heifers, if we can find them."

"Do we have enough money to buy all that?"

"We have lots of cash plus a pretty fair amount of gold and silver. Most of the PAW fiction I've read suggests that in the aftermath of a major disaster that affects the entire country, the price of gold and silver will rise as it became the new medium of exchange. Money that's only backed by the full faith and CREDIT of the US government isn't worth much."

"How much is lots of cash?"

"Around ten grand."

"How much gold and silver?"

"Over 100 ounces of gold and 6 \$1,000 face value bags of junk silver."

"Each bag runs around 715 ounces, so, you have 4,290 ounces of silver?"



"If your math is right, yes; the gold is all Krugerrands. We have 66 one ounce and 55 ounces of fractional coins. My Hurricane Fund for when a hurricane hits downtown LA."

"How much do you think it is worth in dollars?"

"That's very hard to say, Glenda. We can estimate that 121 ounces of gold at \$1,500 an ounce is \$181,500 and those 4,290 ounces of silver at \$30 an ounce is \$128,700. That's a total of..."

"\$310,200."

"Ok, but the prices of things will be much higher."

"There's not going to be much to buy Paul, we're going to need to grow our own."

"We're behind the curve, though. I talked to Tom about horses and it's going to take a fair bit of time to build a herd. He seems to know horses. I'll have to get him together with George."

"If the two of them know what they're doing, get them out and about finding what we need. People are probably going to be selling off livestock because they can't feed it. Suggest that they take the approach that the money is coming out of their own pockets. George will, automatically, but I'm not sure about Tom."

"Tom doesn't strike me as a spendthrift. We might be able to buy a Morgan stallion; he suggested that, and more Morgan fillies or mares. We have a total of roughly 11,000-gallons of gasoline and then no more. We are adding a second propane tank and filling both tanks, but that's probably the end of that. If they're in short supply, I'd expect diesel will be too. We are getting the tank topped off but may have to switch to biodiesel, if anyone here knows how to make it."

"You don't have to know how to make it Paul. You can buy turnkey processors and simply add the raw materials according to instructions. We'd have to hunt around for a processor, but we will find one, I just know it, and we can grow more than enough soybeans."

"What else do we need?"

"It depends on which processor we get, but the general process is acid-catalyzed esterification of free fatty acids followed by base-catalyzed trans-esterification of triglycerides."

"And, there are complete setups available?"

"I've seen them, but can't remember where; it was either someplace in Illinois or Indiana. I'll have to think about it, I may have written down their website and address infor-

mation. There are several different ways to extract the oil from soy beans and I think that information is with the information on the company that builds the biodiesel equipment. If I recall correctly, the two major methods used to obtain soybean oil from the soybean itself are a chemical extraction method and a mechanical extraction method.”

“You have time to find it; we have enough fuel for now. I suppose we could always try to pump some out of the diesel storage tanks at a truck stop. That would give us a second source. Most filling stations sell propane and we’ll probably need to empty them out, if someone doesn’t beat us to it. Is there anything we ought to be doing?”

“You’re going to need more wood or more coal. That’s another source of energy.”

“I’ll add it to my list. I have to go; George and I are on sentry duty in 10 minutes.”

“Be careful and watch your six.”

George was standing there holding the 417 and had my grenades and LAW. Tom had determined that the sentry post would be near the end of the drive where we could see both directions but wouldn’t be noticed until a visitor got close.

“Lock and load.”

“Should that be load and lock?”

“Lock in a magazine and load a cartridge into the chamber. That M1A is just a fancy Garand so the same instruction applies. Load and lock was what John Wayne said in *The Sands of Iwo Jima* and he was talking about getting drunk.”

That was twice the name John Wayne had come up, once referring to a gun belt and now while I was checking out the correct terminology. I was going to have to add some lithium grease to the safety mechanism; it was difficult to push the safety on and off. My thinking that you loaded a cartridge and locked the safety brought that up. However, you can load the M1A with the safety on. It says so right in my book on pages 18 & 19 and insists that that’s the right way to do it.

I didn’t expect we’d have any action on a noon to 4 shift the first day we started maintaining a sentry. We had one passerby, the farmer who I bought the hogs from. I went out and waived him down.

“Paul.”

“Andy. Say would you have any hogs to spare?”

“I don’t have any spare hogs, but I have some I can sell.”

“Sorry, that’s what meant. I need two barrows. How much are you asking?”

“A buck fifty. I know that’s more than double what they were when the bombs came down, but they’re worth more now. That would be \$750 for two hogs.”

“You take gold?”

“It’s better than paper money. It would take a half ounce.”

“I ask George to come by and pick them up and pay you for them.”

“George is sitting right there, why don’t we go now?”

“We’re on sentry duty.”

“Is that the same as guard duty? Why would you be doing that?”

“We have a total of 44 people living here and anyone who saw all of the trailers would figure that out. It wouldn’t be much of a jump to conclude that we have food for 44 people.”

“And you figure someone might try and come and take it?”

“It’s always possible.”

“I’m on my way to town and will be back at my farm after 3.”

“That’s about right; we get off duty at 4.”

“Taking them over to Monterey to get them butchered, cut and wrapped?”

“I thought we would.”

“Pay him cash or gold; don’t let him hold you up for a portion of the meat.”

“Do you know anyone who has two market ready steers and a pair of heifers for sale?”

“Sure do; me. Two bucks a pound. Figure 1,250 pounds on the steers and 900 pounds on the heifers. That would run about five and three-quarters ounces of gold. The whole shebang would be six and one-quarter ounces. For that, I’ll deliver right now and go to town tomorrow.”

“I’m almost afraid to ask, how much are turkeys?”

“I don’t keep turkeys. You might find some from that feller over in Monterey.”

“I see you found the beef and hogs.”

“Did you pay him?”

“I let George in the safe and he took gold to pay him. Did you get fire sale prices?”

“No, I paid double or more of the price on the day of the attack. I don’t think he gouged me either. If we could get some turkeys, we’d be set. Andy recommended asking the guy in Monterey who does the butchering.”

I got the turkeys for \$40 each. I bought 100; I wanted breeding stock so I could start make money by gouging other people on the price of food. I purchased an unfamiliar breed, Red Bourbon, also known as the Bourbon Butternut or Kentucky Red, which was named for Bourbon County, Kentucky. They weren’t a large bird, but could breed, unlike the Broad Breasted White which we were accustomed to. The breed I bought ran about 16 pounds for a young tom and 10 pounds for a young hen. Since 2002, renewed interest in the biological fitness, survivability, and superior flavor of the Bourbon Red had captured consumer interest and created a growing market niche.

My impression was we were in a sort of twilight with folks doing their best to feed their families and defend themselves against criminal activities. By now, the food supplies had surely been exhausted and as the Chinese had shown, hungry people will do whatever it takes to feed them. My other impression was they’d probably start at the city’s boundaries and work their way out. We were only 16 miles from the city border and I felt we could expect trouble soon.

We had two freezers, the one in the shelter and the larger one in the house. They wouldn’t hold the meat from 4 cattle, 22 hogs, 300 chickens and 44 turkeys. None of the motorhomes or trailers had freezers other than the small one that was part of their refrigerator. And, we had to have the livestock butchered soon because most were overweight already. The few stores that had reopened had closed soon after.

“Where do we find some large capacity freezers?”

“Our best bet would be to look at businesses that might use them, restaurants for example and the catering firms. How much storage do we need?”

“Probably 300ft<sup>3</sup>, we have to butcher 4 cattle, 22 hogs, 300 chickens and 44 turkeys.”

“That would take a dozen of the largest Whirlpool chest freezers they make.”

“We’ll go to town and shop around.”

“When?”

“How about now?”

What we found was one store that had 6 freezers all the same size, 72ft<sup>3</sup>. We emptied the spoiled food, there was actually very little left, and left the doors open to air them out. They were large and heavy and we'd need a pallet jack and a truck with a lift to get them home. While we could use the loading dock to load them, to unload them, a lift was the only way to go. The plates on the units said they drew 9.6 amps. While I had the generating capacity, it meant using more diesel fuel.

I knew there was a reason I put in a two hundred amp generator. And to think that the salesman had actually tried to talk me out of a generator that big claiming that for home use, it would use too much fuel. I was always open to advice, like I got from Bob, but I had a 200 amp service panel for the farm so I needed a 200 amps of 240v prime power, just in case. I could also see the wisdom in some of the choices I'd made for firearms, thanks to Bob. No Ma Deuce, but the next best thing, the Tac-50 which could serve as both an anti-personnel and an anti-payload weapon; if, as and when we needed one.

"So now we're into salvaging?"

"I guess so."

"We really could use more military style weapons. A deer rifle will easily kill someone but they only hold four or five shots."

"We could try Tenn Tac."

"Why not Bob?"

"He didn't have any .45s and I bought his last two Browning's and M1As."

"Do you think they'll be open?"

"At this stage of the game, does it matter?"

"I suppose not. Maybe you should go back to Radio Shack and see if the money you left is still lying there."

"I will, but it's not worth much."

"I'll get it if you don't want it."

"I said I'd get it; who knows maybe someone will take it."

We drove over to Monterey to check on the butchering. He said he could do it all and his two sons would do the cutting and wrapping. He asked if we wanted boneless to use up the tallow from our cattle. He wanted \$1.50 a pound and said we'd probably need two dairy cows if our beef were as fat as we suggested. I asked if he took checks and

he said no, but he would accept cash. He said nothing about wanting a portion of the meat.

I asked when to bring the livestock and he said he'd do the cattle first, followed by the hogs, then the chickens and finally the turkeys. If we wanted the bacon and hams cured, that would cost just a little more; it would be whole hams and slab bacon. I told him we'd see him early the next day with the cattle. He was charging 15¢ a pound live weight for the processing of the beef and hogs and a per bird cost on the chickens and turkeys.

On the way back, we checked out Tenn Tac. The firm supplies both the public and law enforcement and I hoped to find some LEO only weapons. We were now paying when needed and taking when necessary; it was not my finest hour. I rationalized a person does what he had to do to survive and protect the people in his care. We actually did quite well in the store, especially if you were a Glock fan. They carried Black Hills ammo and the major brands. Tenn Tac was operated by former LEOs as was Black Hills. The pickup was fully loaded by the time we left for the farm. I could only hope we hadn't been seen; and, yes, I picked up the cash from Radio Shack, it would help pay for the butchering.

"Where do you want the freezers?"

"I suppose they're too heavy to get in the basement, how about the machine shed?"

"You don't have enough power there."

"Four gauge would carry the load, but considering the distance, we'd better sting some two gauge."

"All we have at the shop is one gauge."

"That's even better; it will carry 100 plus amps."

When we delivered the beef the following day, he said give him a week and he wanted half down and paid in full for the two cows. The cows cost \$2,700 and the half down of the processing was \$525. He said to bring the hogs the following day. Their processing was \$412.50 plus the curing charge or a total of \$450. He said to bring over the chickens in two days and it was \$0.75 per bird or \$225. The turkeys were double that or \$1.50 per bird or a total of \$66. The total, \$4,491, was all paid in greenbacks, so we weren't out anything.

"Check it out."

"They're monsters."

Seventy-two ft<sup>3</sup> each. Darned near full too. I guess we'll eat for a while. I stocked both the freezer in the house and in the shelter too."

"Next year, you can take him one hog to turn into whole hog sausage."

"There is a little sausage; I put it in the chest freezer."

"I'll thaw some out for pizza."

"It has been a while, hasn't it? What did the doctor say when he examined Stephanie and you?"

"We're both fine and the babies are fine. He complemented you on keeping us in the shelter for the nine months and nights for three more months. Do you want to know the baby's sex?"

"Ah, the unanswered question from *Patriot Games*. No, why don't you surprise me."

"Ok, I will. How lean is the ground beef we got?"

"I bought two dairy cows with a live weight of 900 pounds each. If they dressed out at say 630 pound each, he added 1,260 pounds of pure lean to the tallow and trimmings. I'll be honest, I didn't think to ask. It must be at least ground chuck or ground round. You need a little fat for taste."

"I'll find out the first time I make meat loaf."

"I hope it's good, I guess I should have asked."

"Ouch."

"What's wrong?"

"He kicked me."

"A boy? Great!"

"Sorry."

"Don't worry about it; I could have let you tell me."

o

"How good are you with that rifle, Paul?"

"Average, I suppose. It has iron sights and I've shot it out to 400 meters."

“That’s about a quarter of a mile. Are you consistent?”

“I shot around a 5 inch pattern.”

“That tells me that you aren’t as good as the rifle.”

“I was shooting surplus ammo. Maybe I should try some of that Black Hills match.”

“When did you pick that up?”

“The other day, when we visited Tenn Tac.”

“They were open?”

“Not exactly.”

“Why don’t you get some of that ammo and we’ll go to the range?”

“You found it?”

“One of the others found it and mentioned it to me. How long is it?”

“Five hundred meters.”

“The effective range of your rifle is 500 yards without optics. Why don’t we try 500 meters with the match ammo? We’ll use a big bullseye so you can see it that far.”

“How much further is that?”

“About 50 yards; if you’re any good at all, that Loaded can do it.”

I got two boxes of the match ammo and my rifle. There wasn’t much wind and it was out of the west. The range ran from west to east. After Tom set up the target, I loaded the magazine in the rifle, adjusted the elevation 8 clicks and shooting from the picnic table that served as the bench, fired my first shot.

“Bullseye, do that again.”

My rifle was sighted to point of aim and I kept the front blade centered on the bullseye. When I finished the magazine, Tom picked up a second target and went for the first one. When he got back he said, “You lied.”

“What do you mean?”

“Look at the target.”



I could tell two things from the target, the group was tight, 5" or less and it was about one click low. I pulled out my notebook and wrote down 9 clicks for 500 meters, realizing I'd adjusted for 500 yards, not 500 meters. The adjustment for 400 yards was 6 clicks and 400 meters 7 clicks. It appeared to make more of a difference than I thought it would by using match ammo. Bob had claimed the surplus was near match grade; apparently that wasn't the same as match grade. There were 4 cases or 2,000 rounds of the 168gr Black Hills HP match and 2 cases or 1,000 rounds of the 165gr Black Hills soft point. There was also 4 cases of 175gr BTHP. This wasn't a military operation and I planned to use match ammo from now on.

The rifle was sighted in for 100 yards and there was no appreciable change at 200 yards, even with the surplus ammo. I hadn't fired at each range or my notebook would have had more sighting adjustments. That was something I figured I'd better rectify soon. After the trip to the range, I unloaded my loaded magazines and replaced the surplus with Black Hills match.

"Glenda says we're having a boy."

"We're having a girl. Were you out on the range this morning?"

"Tom and I went out and I put some of the Black Hills match that you and I picked up through the rifle. It's more accurate than the surplus and I swapped out the ammo in my magazines."

"It's not legal."

"Sure it is. Do you mean the Geneva Conventions? I don't recall signing those, I must be getting old."

"No, I mean the Hague Conventions of 1899. They prohibit the use of expanding bullets. I suppose that you're right, we aren't in the military. Do we have any 5.56 hunting ammo?"

"I sure don't, I bought M855. Is that Andy coming?"

"It's not his pickup, unless he traded."

"Heads up George, I don't believe Andy would have an old Plymouth sedan. Glenda, we may have a visitor, standby one."

"K"

"Help you fellas?"

## Trapped – Chapter 8

“We’re looking for meat to buy.”

“We don’t happen to have any at the moment. Mind if I ask how you intend to pay for it? I may know somebody who has some.”

“We can pay cash.”

“The fella I had in mind only accepts gold, sorry.”

“What if we could come up with gold? Do think he’d sell then?”

“I can’t speak for him. I suppose if you came up with some gold and could show me you had enough, I might be inclined to introduce you to him.”

“We’ll be back.”

“We’ll be here.”

o

“What do you think Paul?”

“I don’t like the looks of them. If they had gold, why didn’t they have it with them? That’s why I didn’t tell them it was Andy with the livestock.”

“Paul, this is Glenda; is everything okay?”

“It was a bunch looking for meat. I’ll tell you about when I’m off shift. They’re gone for now.”

“I had Tom and some of the others standing by.”

“That was a good idea; frankly, I didn’t like their looks. You can let them go, but tell them to keep their radios handy.”

“K”

Since Tom was in charge of security, he came up to the sentry post to talk to George and me.

“What went down?”

“Four guys in an old Plymouth sedan who claimed they were looking for meat.”

“What’s your take on the situation?”

“I didn’t like their looks, Tom. When I told them I knew where they could get meat if they had gold, they suddenly seemed to think they could get gold. The gold dealer I used pulled out and took his gold with him; at least, he said that was what he planned to do.”

“How did you leave it with them?”

“They said they’d be back and I told them we’d be here.”

“I’m going to double the guard for the next few days. I think I’ll have two men with battle rifles and two with automatic weapons. Did they have guns?”

“I didn’t see any, but that doesn’t mean they didn’t have handguns.”

“If they said they’d be back, they could just be imitating Arnold, or they could come after hours.”

“Somehow, I believed them.”

“I’m going back for my equipment and will bring whoever is free at the moment. I’m going to err on the side of caution and not push our luck”

Tom returned a few minutes later with Jerry, my concrete man. Tom had a Battle rifle and Jerry an M16. They were equipped much like we were with one LAW and two grenades each.”

“How long do you plan to keep this up?”

“Until I feel secure that those guys won’t be coming back.”

o

“Was there trouble?”

“Yes and no I guess I laid it out pretty well on the radio. We’re doubling the guard until Tom’s confident that we’re secure here. I wonder how many of the women and older teens shoot.”

“I’ll ask around tomorrow. Are there enough weapons and ammo?”

“That’s iffy because I don’t know how many of the AR15s and M16s are left. There are a gob of Glock 9mm pistols though. I know that with you this far along it would be difficult for you to wear a handgun but I think you should.”

“The paddle holster will work, but I can’t wear a belt, so how do I carry spare magazines?”

“How about a belt over your shoulder?”

“I’ll try that, it might just work.”

That night, I didn’t sleep well, tossing and turning. My mind was active running through the ‘what-if’s’. What if ‘they’ tried a sneak attack? What if they came in force? I must have considered a dozen or more scenarios with outcomes ranging from we won to we lost. The farm land was mostly open and if they came from one corner, crossing the fields, they could easily sneak into the homestead unnoticed. Even if we had a mesh wire fence and concertina, a determined person could penetrate it, with time and patience.

“You don’t look good, Paul.”

“I didn’t sleep well, Tom. I must have been dreaming, I don’t really know. I do know that I must have considered a dozen or more scenarios about the farm being attacked. It included broad daylight, nighttime, a small force and a large force. Let me ask a question. If everyone we have here who can shoot effectively were armed, how large of a force would we have?”

“Thirty-six. Glenda has been around talking to the wives and when I heard, I did my own count.”

“How much of an advantage would we have in being a defending force?”

“Traditionally it is accepted that a defending force has a 3:1 advantage over an attacker. In other words, a defending force can hold off three times its own number of attackers. We need to take a lesson from history, Paul. Von Clausewitz said to the effect that:”

*This is in tactics, as well as in strategy, the most general principle of victory, and shall be examined by us first in its generality, for which we may be permitted the following exposition:*

*Strategy fixes the point where, the time when, and the numerical force with which the battle is to be fought. By this triple determination it has therefore a very essential influence on the issue of the combat. If tactics has fought the battle, if the result is over, let it be victory or defeat, strategy makes such use of it as can be made in accordance with the great object of the war. This object of the war is naturally often a very distant one; seldom does it lie quite close at hand. A series of other objects subordinate themselves to it as means. These objects, which are at the same time means to a higher object, may be practically of various kinds; even the ultimate aim of the whole war is a different one in every war. We shall make ourselves acquainted with these things according as we become acquainted with the separate objects which they come in contact with; and it*

*is not our intention here to embrace the whole subject by a complete enumeration of them, even if that were possible. We therefore let the employment of the battle stand over for the present.*

*Even those things through which strategy has an influence on the issue of the combat, inasmuch as it establishes the same, to a certain extent decrees them, are not so simple that they can be embraced in one single view. For as strategy appoints time, place and force, it can do so in practice in many ways, each of which influences in a different manner the result of the combat as well as its consequences. Therefore we shall only get acquainted with this also by degrees, that is, through the subjects which determine more closely the application.*

*If we strip the combat of all modifications which it may undergo according to its immediate purpose and the circumstances from which it proceeds, lastly if we set aside the valor of the troops, because that is a given quantity, then there remains only the bare conception of the combat, that is a combat without form, in which we distinguish nothing but the number of the combatants.*

*This number will therefore determine victory. Now from the number of things above deducted to get to this point, it is shown that the superiority in numbers in a battle is only one of the factors employed to produce victory; that therefore so far from having with the superiority in number obtained all, or even only the principal thing, we have perhaps got very little by it, according as the other circumstances which co-operate happen to be so, or so.*

*But this superiority has degrees, if it may be imagined, twofold, threefold or four times as many, etc., etc., and everyone sees, that by increasing in this way, it must (at last) overpower everything else.*

*In such an aspect we grant, that the superiority in numbers is the most important factor in the result of a combat, only it must be sufficiently great to be a counterpoise to all the other co-operating circumstances. The direct result of this is, that the greatest possible number of troops should be brought into action at the decisive point.*

*Whether the troops thus brought are sufficient or not, we have then done in this respect all that our means allowed. This is the first principle in strategy, therefore in general as now stated, it is just as well suited for Greeks and Persians, or for Englishmen and Marathas, as for French and Germans. But we shall take a glance at our relations in Europe, as respects war, in order to arrive at some more definite idea on this subject. Here we find armies much more like one another in equipment, organization, and practical skill of every kind. There only remains still alternately a difference in the military virtue of armies, and in the talent of generals. If we go through the military history of modern Europe, we find no example of a Marathon.*

*Frederick the Great beat 80,000 Austrians at Leuthen with about 30,000 men, and at Rosbach with 25,000 some 50,000 allies; these are however the only instances of victo-*

*ries gained against an enemy double, or more than double in numbers. Charles XII., in the battle of Narva, we cannot well quote, the Russians were at that time hardly to be regarded as Europeans, also the principal circumstances even of the battle, are but too little known. Bonaparte had at Dresden 120,000 against 220,000, therefore not the double. At Collin, Frederick the Great did not succeed, with 30,000 against 50,000 Austrians, neither Bonaparte in the desperate battle of Leipsic, where he was 160,000 strong, against 280,000, the superiority therefore considerably less than double.*

*From this we may infer, that it is very difficult in the present state of Europe, for the most talented general to gain a victory over an enemy double his strength. Now if we see double numbers, such a weight in the scale against the greatest generals, we may be sure, that in ordinary cases, in small as well as great combats, an important superiority of numbers, but which need not be over two to one, will be sufficient to ensure the victory, however disadvantageous other circumstances may be. Certainly, we may imagine a defile which even tenfold would not suffice to force, but in such a case it can be no question of a battle at all.*

*We think therefore, that exactly in our relations, as well as in all similar ones, the superiority at the decisive point is a matter of capital importance, and that this subject, in the generality of cases, is decidedly the most important of all. The strength at the decisive point depends on the absolute strength of the army, and on skill in making use of it.*

*The first rule is therefore to enter the field with an army as strong as possible. This sounds very like a common place, but still is really not so.*

*In order to show that for a long time the strength of forces was by no means regarded as a chief point, we need only observe, that in most, and even in the most detailed histories of the wars, in the eighteenth century, the strength of the armies is either not given at all, or only incidentally, and in no case is any special value laid upon it. Tempelhof in his history of the 'Seven Years' War is the earliest writer who gives it regularly, but at the same time he does it only very superficially.*

*Even Massenbach, in his manifold critical observations on the Prussian campaigns of 1793-94 in the Vosges, talks a great deal about hills and valleys, roads and footpaths, but does not say a syllable about mutual strength.*

*Another proof lies in a wonderful notion which haunted the heads of many critical historians, according to which there was a certain size of an army which was the best, a normal strength, beyond which the forces in excess were burdensome rather than serviceable.*

*Lastly, there are a number of instances to be found, in which all the available forces were not really brought into the battle, or into the war, because the superiority of numbers was not considered to have that importance which in the nature of things belongs to it.*

*If we are thoroughly penetrated with the conviction that with a considerable superiority of numbers everything possible is to be effected, then it cannot fail that this clear conviction reacts on the preparations for the war, so as to make us appear in the field with as many troops as possible, and either to give us ourselves the superiority, or at least to guard against the enemy obtaining it. So much for what concerns the absolute force with which the war is to be conducted.*

*The measure of this absolute force is determined by the government; and although with this determination the real action of war commences, and it forms an essential part of the strategy of the war, still in most cases the general who is to command these forces in the war must regard their absolute strength as a given quantity, whether it be that he has had no voice in fixing it, or that circumstances prevented a sufficient expansion being given to it.*

*There remains nothing, therefore, where an absolute superiority is not attainable, but to produce a relative one at the decisive point, by making skillful use of what we have. The calculation of space and time appears as the most essential thing to this end, and this has caused that subject to be regarded as one which embraces nearly the whole art of using military forces. Indeed, some have gone so far as to ascribe to great strategists and tacticians a mental organ peculiarly adapted to this point.*

*But the calculation of time and space, although it lies universally at the foundation of strategy, and is to a certain extent its daily bread, is still neither the most difficult, nor the most decisive one.*

*If we take an unprejudiced glance at military history, we shall find that the instances in which mistakes in such a calculation have proved the cause of serious losses are very rare, at least in strategy. But if the conception of a skillful combination of time and space is fully to account for every instance of a resolute and active commander beating several separate opponents with one and the same army (Frederick the Great, Bonaparte), then we perplex ourselves unnecessarily with conventional language. For the sake of clearness and the profitable use of conceptions, it is necessary that things should always be called by their right names.*

*The right appreciation of their opponents (Daun, Schwartzenburg), the audacity to leave for a short space of time a small force only before them, energy in forced marches, boldness in sudden attacks, the intensified activity which great souls acquire in the moment of danger, these are the grounds of such victories; and what have these to do with the ability to make an exact calculation of two such simple things as time and space?*

*But even this ricocheting play of forces, "when the victories at Rosbach and Montmirail give the impulse to victories at Leuthen and Montereau," to which great generals on the defensive have often trusted, is still, if we would be clear and exact, only a rare occurrence in history.*

*Much more frequently the relative superiority – that is, the skillful assemblage of superior forces at the decisive point – has its foundation in the right appreciation of those points, in the judicious direction which by that means has been given to the forces from the very first, and in the resolution required to sacrifice the unimportant to the advantage of the important – that is, to keep the forces concentrated in an overpowering mass. In this, Frederick the Great and Bonaparte are particularly characteristic.*

*We think we have now allotted to the superiority in numbers the importance which belongs to it; it is to be regarded as the fundamental idea, always to be aimed at before all and as far as possible.*

*But to regard it on this account as a necessary condition of victory would be a complete misconception of our exposition; in the conclusion to be drawn from it there lies much rather nothing more than the value which should attach to numerical strength in the combat. If that strength is made as great as possible, then the maxim is satisfied; a review of the total relations must then decide whether or not the combat is to be avoided for want of sufficient force.*

“That’s book three, chapter eight of *On War*. He was a Prussian General and should not be confused with the guy at Valley Forge, von Steuben. Sorry, I sort of like to study military history and planning.”

“I don’t mind, Tom. I guess I did better than I thought in selecting you as security chief. So, how would you handle the possibility of them coming in one corner of the farm and sneaking across the field?”

“First, we’d need night vision for four people. Second, we’d station a pair of night vision equipped sentries at each front corner. The back of the farm in up against a small mountain and it would be a very long and difficult hike for anyone to come from the back. I’m not saying it can’t be done, but I’m saying that those guys you described probably wouldn’t be up to it. With four sentries, we’d have adequate warning.”

“Ok.”

“With adequate warning, we could be waiting for them as they approached the farm buildings. With any luck, we could cut them down like so much wheat in a field.”

“Spray and pray?”

“No, we’d use aimed shots from concealment and cover. Spray and pray is a worthless military tactic. At best, it’s a last ditch desperate measure. Don’t mix up concealment with cover; an example of cover vs. concealment would be sandbags vs. tall grass.”

“Can you get someone to cover for George and me? I’m going to see what we can do to improve our armament.”



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“How many armories are in this state?”

“Over 100.”

“And how many of them store weapons?”

“All of them. However, they don’t store ammo. That comes from statewide distribution points.”

“Could we get weapons from an armory?”

“Of course; however, we’d have to be selective, some of the weapons in the hands of National Guard troops are nothing but junk.”

“Pick a place where we might find enough good M16s for our little band.”

“I know just where to go. They were issued M4s, not that long ago. Now, ammo could be a problem being they nuked Nashville.”

“No other sites?”

“More, maybe. If the Guard mobilized, I doubt we could get into the place. The State Defense Force could be a problem too. In 1985 the Tennessee Defense Force was formed to provide a trained and organized military reserve force under the control of the Governor and would provide service to the state when the National Guard was under Federal Control or otherwise on a mission for the Governor and unable to perform certain duties to meet the needs of the people. In 1998 the Legislature of the State of Tennessee changed the name to Tennessee State Guard.”

“But, if we could get some M4s, magazines and ammo, it would improve our odds in case we were attacked by, say those guys who came looking for meat.”

“Standing around talking about isn’t getting it done Paul; let’s go.”

George said it was government policy to have ammo in more than one place. He knew that there was ammo in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville. He thought we’d find ammo in Chattanooga too. We opted for the latter because it was the closest. We’d look there for military rifles and if we didn’t find what we needed, we try the other place he had in mind. Ammo storage locations have weapons but armories don’t usually have ammo. Hence the policy of have it available in several locations around a state. A nuke in one location wouldn’t eliminate the entire ammo supply.

I had been told that the best way to clean an M4/M16 was to use carburetor cleaner to remove the carbon. If you used enough, it even removed the carbon that had built up in

the pores of the metal. In combat, a M4/M16 would have to be lubricated after a standard loadout of 210 rounds had been fired. You did this by pulling the bolt back and apply CLP. This would allow you to fire about three more magazines before you had to disassemble the rifle and clean it. Unit tactics resulted in most of the rifles coming up dirty at the same time and individual would lubricate their rifle. The second time it happened, soldiers with handguns would maintain suppressive fire while the others cleaned their rifles.

Some people think the M16 is the best thing to come along since Granny Smith apples. They may be, until they get dirty. When are they most likely to get dirty? Why, in combat, of course. It hadn't taken long for me to develop a preference for the M1A and its gas piston design. The HK416/417 also had that improvement, based on their G36, a weapon that used a self-regulating short-stroke gas piston system (without a gas valve). Carbine Williams didn't develop the M1 carbine, but he did develop the short piston design it used and held patent, no. 2,090,656, which clearly shows gas being tapped off ahead of a chamber to a piston below.

"Is this the place?"

"Damned if I know, Paul; I've never been here before."

"But, you do know what to look for, right?"

"Yeah an ammo bunker."

"Uh, duh. I didn't need to bring you half way across the state to tell me that."

"Have you ever seen an ammo bunker?"

"No. How hard can it be? They probably build a concrete structure and cover it with dirt. It has a door on the front end that's probably locked."

"Look, the storage of live ammunition and explosives is inherently hazardous. There is the potential for accidents in unloading, packing and transfer; the threat of theft, misuse or sabotage; and, if neglected, the near-certainty that poorly stored explosives will degrade and become shock-sensitive over time.

"The typical ammo dump will have several of the following elements:

- A buffer zone or cleared area of at least several hundred feet (sometimes as much as 1–2 km or 1 mile) surrounding the facility, in the event of an explosion
- Perimeter security, such as a fence, to avoid casual access by unauthorized persons
- Guards equipped and in numbers relative to the potential threat from enemy forces
- Bunkers (Magazines) where ammunition is stored under lock and key

- Blast barriers (Traverses), such as an earth berm or buried pit, to divert the force of the blast (typically upward, but sometimes to the side) in case the ammunition detonates
- Safety Distances are calculated between storage sites (magazines) and outside infrastructure to limit damage and set max holdings of net explosive content per site.
- A loading area (Transit Building or Area) for transferring stored ammunition to and from trucks, ships, etc.
- A flooding system in large facilities to put out a fire or prevent an explosion in a magazine.
- An Ammunition Repair Facility or workshop will be found in many ammunition facilities. This facility is used for the repair, breakdown, inspection, and manufacture of ammunition held within or brought to the Depot.
- A Destruction Area (Demolition Range) used for the disposal by burning or detonation of defective, surplus, or obsolete ammunition and explosives. ”

“So what we’re looking for is called a magazine?”

“Right, but you can call it anything you want. Weapons would be stored separately. I seriously doubt there will be any guards. However, I wore my BDUs, just in case.”

“How do you repair rifle ammo?”

“You don’t; that’s why there are Destruction Areas. If we get lucky, we might find some other things here.”

“Like what?”

“Well, if we’re concerned about being invaded, I wouldn’t mind having a few Claymore mines.”

“Do you know how to use them?”

“I read the Army Field Manual once.”

“When?”

“Oh, maybe ten years back. They come 6 to the box with one test set so you can check the wiring and are in M7 bandoleers, one mine each.”

“I’m not so sure about getting something that you read the Field Manual once ten years ago.”

“I saw a demonstration once.”

“In person?”

## Trapped – Chapter 9

“No, it was an Army training film. This is an ammo magazine.”

“Pop the lock and see what’s in there.”

“It’s, uh, 7.62. M118LR.”

“Ok, we’ll take some of that.”

“How much do you want?”

“How close can we get the truck?”

“I’ll go get it and drive it over here. You check out the magazine and decide how much you want.”

I looked and there was a bunch of the ammo. I checked the lot numbers with my flashlight and found 15 cases with the same lot number. I began to stack those by the door. When George showed up, I told him to load them in the back of the pickup. We checked the next magazine and it held an assortment of grenades, all 40mm. We skipped that magazine and moved to the next one. It held M855 ammo. There were 45 cases of the same lot number and we loaded them all. If there was a pattern, the next magazine should hold more grenades. It didn’t; it held M18A1 Claymore mines, maybe 30-35 (33.67) pounds per box of 6 bandoleers.

“I knew we’d find them.”

“I not so sure we should take them.”

“There are 1,782 mines here, 297 cases. They are a perfect defensive weapon. They come with instructions, for crying out loud.”

“Six per case?”

“Right; how many cases are we taking?”

“Leave some room for grenades. I want some smoke and some flash bangs.”

“What, no concussion grenades?”

“What are those for?”

“Offense. The frags are defensive grenades and the flash bangs are basically used for entry where you don’t want to kill anyone.”

“Just leave room for some grenades.”

“Let’s get them first and round out the load with Claymores.”

“Where are you going to put the rifles?”

“In the back seat; where else would I put them?”

There was an advantage to one stop shopping, everything was in one place and they were giving 100% discounts. It occurred to me how this had started, taking some radios from Radio Shack. Then it was mostly cleaning out Tenn Tac. By now, it was almost second nature; I had a pregnant wife to protect. In fact, Glenda, Stephanie and two other women were expecting. They must have found a way to spend the time they spent in the shelter.

The trip, one way was right at 110 miles, just under a two hour drive. It took us an hour at the ammo dump and we were back almost in time for our guard shift. Since Tom had covered for us, I got him and showed him what we’d picked up.

“Why didn’t you get machine guns?”

“Didn’t see any because we didn’t look for any; however, those Claymores should more than make up for that.”

“How many did you get?”

“We didn’t count. We got the smoke, fragmentation, concussion and flash bang grenades then filled up the back of the pickup. There are at least a dozen cases because I carried six.”

“They are eighteen cases, Tom. I carried two cases at a time.”

“I’ve used them, they’re nasty business.”

“Good, maybe you can train George. He read the Field Manual once, ten years ago and saw a demonstration film.”

“These weapons are new.”

“Do we have any carburetor cleaner?”

“Why, is your engine running rough?”

“I’ve hear it was the best way to clean the rifle. Bob told me that, if I recall correctly.”

“Well, I’ve used the M16 in Desert Storm and the gas tube in a bitch to clean. If we don’t have any, I’ll get some. I don’t know why we bother; surely this must be the end of the world.”

I stamped the ground with my boot, “Seems pretty solid to me.”

“Haven’t you read Revelations?”

“I have, actually Tom. We used to see all those shows on TV about End Times, Armageddon and the Apocalypse. I’m not buying into that until we see the beast. Supposedly, he will lead us through good times for half his reign and then, we’re just plain out of luck. I’ll grant that the four horsemen could be riding among us; however, I haven’t seen any evidence.”

“What do you call WW III?”

“A political failure; people engaging their mouths before their brains and being forced to live with result.”

“That’s easy for you to say, you have this farm.”

“Mi casa es su casa.”

“I’ll figure out where we want to plant the mines. George, do you want to help me?”

“Sure. We need to put in some foxholes and use the dirt to fill sandbags.”

“Do you have bags?”

“They’re some in the…” I started to say.

“Machine shed,” they laughed.

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“They’re back. They claim that they have gold.”

“I’ll be right there. George, get Tom and back me up.”

“Fellas, I understand that you have gold now.”

“Right here he said holding out a plastic container.”

“What’s that?”

“Gold, mostly rings. They’re sorted according to carat of the gold.”

“Where did you get those?”

“We started with our rings and our wives rings. It didn’t seem like a lot so we went to a jewelry store and looted it.”

“What much do you figure you have in pure gold?”

“I calculated it and if the gold could be extracted, around three ounces of pure gold.”

“We bought some beef and it ran around two bucks a pound, live weight. You could buy one beef and maybe two hogs for 3 ounces of pure gold.”

“Do you have cattle and hogs?”

“Just what we’re raising to eat. We have chickens and turkeys, too; however we don’t have enough to sell. I’ll send someone after the farmer with livestock for sale and you can work out your own deal with him.”

“Will he take the rings and necklaces?”

“I don’t know. Are you sure they’re equal to three ounces of pure gold?”

“Actually, 3.1 ounces, why?”

“I trade you 3 Krugerrand one ounce coins and one one-tenth ounce coin. It might be fun to see if we can extract the gold. Tom, go get Andy.”

“Could I have a word with you, boss?”

“Excuse me for a moment. Ok, what’s up Tom?”

“They said that they stole some of the gold from the jewelry store.”

“Did they have to admit it?”

“I guess not, why?”

“I feel like I can trust them because they were honest enough to admit they stole some of the gold. None of them have wedding rings, just the shadows on their fingers where the rings once were.”

“And just the other day, you didn’t trust them.”

“That’s right, I didn’t know if they were honest and didn’t like their looks.”

“So George and you went a long way to get things we turned out not to need?”

“Who says we don’t need them? I don’t believe we need them this time, but I doubt this is over.”

“What is over?”

“The bad times.”

“I go get Andy and tell him they have 3.1 ounces of gold.”

“How are you fellas going to get the meat butchered, cut up and wrapped?”

“Two of us are meat cutters from the grocery store. We’ll figure out something.”

“Did you get a chance to get some groceries from the store before the attack?”

“A delivery truck pulled in and rather than unloading it, we borrowed it. It had some of everything and we’ve learned to adapt.”

“I see the handguns, but haven’t seen any rifles.”

“We have some, they’re in the trunk. We figured if we showed up rifles in hand, we might not get the best reception.”

“Good thinking. Our group has around 44 people with more on the way. Mind if I ask how large your group is?”

“We have seven families and three unrelated singles.”

Andy pulled in with his truck and had one fat beef and four hogs.

“I understand you fellers are looking for meat?”

“That’s right. What do you have?”

“Tom told me how much gold you have and I can let you have the meat on the truck for a shade less than 3 ounces. I have chickens if you want them to round out your diet. You’ll have to come up with cages to transport them. For the full three ounces, I add 125 chickens.”

“You have a deal; my name is Frank Thomas and we live in town.”

“Why would you do a fool thing like that? What you oughta do is get out here in the country. There are empty farms if you look around and livestock can be bought or traded for.”



“Where is there empty land?”

“The farm you drove past next to this one is sitting empty. The buildings are good, it has a good well and the guy that lived there had a farm generator in case he lost power. They were gone when the war came and never made it back. They didn’t have any family, so you don’t have to worry about any kids coming and kicking you off the land. The farm is the same size as Paul’s, a half section.”

“How big is the house?”

“It would have held around 10 kids; that’s what his father raised when he had the farm. The brothers and sisters are all moved off around the country and we haven’t seen them in years.”

“We might look it over and see if it might work for us. Thanks for helping us out Paul.”

“Don’t mention it; and, I mean that literally.”

“Why not?”

“Before we figured out you were on the up and up, we were waiting for an attack.”

“Man, I’m sorry if we gave that impression.”

“Don’t worry about it Frank, one of the things I learned on those preparedness websites was there is security in numbers.”

Obviously I didn’t say that with Andy on one side and his people on the other, we had a built in warning system. Past Andy’s the road petered out, as they frequently do here in Tennessee. There was a trail going on, but no improved road. With this development, we needed a meeting of the security staff.

“The first question I want to examine is whether we leave those mines in place.”

“That’s the classic question Paul. Would you rather have them and not need them or need them and not have them? I think we should leave them in place for now.”

Tom’s remark generated several conversations. It left me wondering if I should handle this in a democratic fashion by taking a vote; or, consider their counsel and make the decision myself.

“Paul, the consensus is to leave them in place, for now.”

“Ok, for a while at least.”

“Why are you reluctant?”

“I’m a hunter by nature. I’m rather new to this preparedness or survivalist business.”

“And you weren’t in the military?”

“It’s now an all-volunteer force and I failed the physical, so no, I wasn’t in the military.”

“You’re not half bad with the M1A, how are you with that Tac-50?”

“Extremely good to five hundred meters; I’d need a longer range to practice at greater distances.”

“How is the rifle equipped?”

“Same as the military Mk-15 with the 12-42x56 Nightforce scope, a dozen extra magazines and night vision rail with a MUNS. I have Hornady 750gr A-MAX Match and Mk211MP.”

“I’ll talk to Frank and see if he objects to our extending our range. However, if you use the diagonal, you can put in a range that’s just short of 2,000 yards.”

“How do you figure?”

“Well, the short side would be ½ mile or 880 yards and the long side 1 mile or 1,760 yards. If you square both numbers, add them together and computer the square root, you get 1,968 yards.”

“You did that in your head?”

“No, I used a calculator and figured it out a while back. Boss man, several of us were in the military and a couple in the National Guard. We know what to do and if you’ll trust me to see to security, I’ll make sure at least one person with military experience is on every team. You didn’t have to tell me to put in those shelters or pass out money to all of the employees and they’ll remember that for a long time to come. You did what was right rather than expedient and now you’re providing us a safe home.”

I blushed not knowing how to respond and was embarrassed by the praise. I’d only done what any good employer should have done who had the ability. I changed the subject.

“You’re in charge of security, Tom, you do whatever it takes. George, can we ride those fillies yet?”

“They’re old enough and are broken to saddle. However, they’re bred and I wouldn’t recommend it. If we keep breeding to produce a horse herd, it will be at least four years before we’ll have horses to ride.”

“But I need to learn to ride. Are there any other alternatives?”

“You can buy more horses.”

“Where?”

“When we bought the fillies at the auction, I talked to several of the breeders who had horses up for sale. That Morgan breeder is not far away and he also breeds Tennessee Walking Horses. We’d have to go to Shelbyville and they won’t be cheap.”

I later learned that Shelbyville was considered to be the Tennessee Walking Horse capital of the world. It was around 120 miles from the farm. We’d go west to Lebanon and south from there to Shelbyville. I only had a four horse trailer and I really wanted a minimum of eight more horses, four geldings and four mares. George scrounged around and came up with a fifth wheel, 6 horse trailer with living accommodations, pulled by a semi-tractor. That would let us get up to ten horses, maybe a Morgan stallion and/or a TWH stallion.

As it turned out, the breeders were hurting because they were way short of hay. The six mares, one Morgan and five TWH, and two TWH geldings went for 2 ounces each while the two proven stallions went for four ounces each, a total of 24 ounces of the dwindling gold supply, used tack included, for all ten horses. George was wrong, the horses were relatively cheap, considering. The two geldings were broken to harness and saddle and the mares all broken to saddle. All six mares had been bred to different stallions so we would have a mixed blood line, of sorts. That only left two riding horses unless you wanted to try a stallion.

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Frank Thomas and his bunch moved into the next farm over and pulled in single wide mobile homes for the overflow crowd. He came over and asked for help in extending plumbing, electricity and sewage to the trailers. As much as they wanted meat, they held off butchering two gilts, preferring to breed them for meat. Andy was happy to oblige and provided his boar. He also provided them a bred milk cow. He told Frank that he’d help them out as he could because the way he saw it we were all in this together.

Frank and the other meat cutter cleaned out the equipment from the meat department at the grocery store and ask our help in moving the walk-in cooler. They would provide butchering and meat cutting in exchange for a small amount of the meat, mostly the stuff that went into ground meat.

Tom and I examined what we had in the way of military rifles and supplied the Thomas bunch with enough to hold their own against any attackers. That included a bit of everything, rifles, ammo, assorted grenades, a few rockets and a few Claymores. We added what CB radios we could spare so they could keep in touch or let us know if they were attacked.

“You need to get me to town.”

“Why?”

“My water broke and I’m in labor.”

“Pickup or car?”

“Car, I can’t get up into the pickup. No need to rush, I’ve only had a few contractions.”

I took Glenda at her word and drove a sedate 60mph into town. It turned into a very long wait, what with it being her first baby and all. The doctor had just advised that it would be a while yet, she was at eight centimeters, when who should show up but George and Stephanie. She was just beginning her labor.

“How long have you been here?”

“Twelve hours give or take.”

“I told Tom and he’ll make sure our shifts are covered. I’d like to suggest that we don’t pull sentry duty. I’ve got my hands full running the farm and you pretty much have your hands full keeping everything running smooth. He has two high school seniors that he has trained to take our places.”

“Would that be right? I need to feel like I’m participating.”

“Did you actually work on the construction jobs?”

“Ok, I see your point. There are a lot of things to do like ensuring we have a fuel supply, odds and ends from groceries, a continuous power supply and other things.”

“Right, you need to start thinking like a Chief rather than an Indian. What are we going to do for power when we can’t get fuel or the generator wears out?”

“Have you seen any large standby generators in town?”

“A couple, how big were you thinking?”

“For everything? Maybe we’d need 1,000 amps.”

“At 120 volts, right?”

“Right, 120/240 volts single phase. If you use Pie, we’d need 120,000 watts. However, the generator salesman said something about the difference in real power and apparent power. I didn’t understand, but it has something to do with motors. So, I think we should look for a generator with a capacity of  $120\text{kw} \div .6$  or 200kw for the entire farm. I have spec sheets on my computer and I looked. Cummins makes the DSHAD, and it would suit our purposes. However, at full power, it burns around 17gph and 80,000-gallons of diesel would only last a little over 4,700 hours or about 145 days. The question is; can we keep the diesel tanks full?”

“Can you get oil filters and oil for it?”

“We’ll worry about that if we can find the generator.”

“Do you know where to look?”

“Yes, I looked them up and stored the information. There are distributors in Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga.”

“If we go to Chattanooga, we can look for more stuff at the depot.”

You have to ask yourself what the likelihood was of finding a new-in-the-box 200kw diesel generator; probably slim or none. Conversely, in the run up to the war, especially due to continuing power outages, more and more people and businesses had been forced to put in standby power in case the grid went down. If a power failure shut them down, the costs far exceeded the depreciation expense of a generator. The energy shortage went all the way back to the year 2000, when companies like Enron manipulated the electricity supply in California.

The company in Chattanooga was the northern outlet for a chain of stores that went down into Florida. We drove down there to look around. The business was locked up so we did what was starting to become natural and broke in. We looked at every generator in the place and couldn’t find what we wanted. I found a list of locations and was about to suggest to George that we moved on south.

“We didn’t check the tractor trailer pulled up to the loading dock.”

“Yeah right, there will be three or four on it.”

“Think positive, you never know what we’ll find. No doubt some filters and oil, if nothing else.”

“Is the seal still on the trailer?”

“Yes, it hasn’t been unloaded. They must have just pulled in when TSHTF.”

“What model are you looking for?”

## Trapped – Chapter 10

“DSHAD, 200kw 120/240 stacked single phase. That makes sense; the attack came just as we were getting up from dinner. Go ahead and open up so we can see what’s in the trailer.”

“There are two but we can’t take them.”

“Why not?”

“They’re supposed to go to a different store, down in Florida.”

“What else is on the truck?”

“Several drums of Valvoline and several cases of quarts, too. These boxes are oil filters; let me check the number against the filters on the generators. Uh, they’re the right ones. This thing looks like it weighs a couple of tons.”

“I think it weighs around a ton and a half, George. It’s an inline 6-cylinder diesel. It takes nearly 30 quarts of oil. Why don’t we just load the other filters and oil from the store onto the truck and take it home?”

“That beats the hell out of any other idea I can think of. You stand guard and I’ll haul the stuff.”

“I don’t see anyone around.”

“Good, keep it that way.”

It took over an hour to get everything we might want or need from the store. From there, we went back to the depot and filled in all the empty space in the trailer, plus my pickup and trailer, from the bunkers and looked for machineguns. We found five M240Bs and three M2HBs. George selected the belted ammo to go with the guns and made sure there were spare barrels. It took about two and a half hours to get home.

“Frank, I picked up a bigger generator for you.”

“Where did you find that?”

“I didn’t find it; I went looking at a Cummins dealer in Chattanooga. You’ll have all the power you need, but you’re going to need big fuel tanks, it burns around 17gph at full load. I have two 40,000-gallon tanks installed at my place, but I’d like to put in more. Before you put fuel in the tanks, let me know and I’ll let you have some PRI-D. It restores bad fuel back to original specs.”

A company in Bakersfield, California (Bryant Fuel Systems) makes a similar 40,000-gallon underground fiberglass fuel tanks and ships them all over the country. Before the war, that is. It's so peaceful out here in the country, I sometimes have to remind myself that we're on our own and I have a new son at home. We named him Paul George Kersey and Glenda was home the next day. The doctor recommended circumcision and I figured it would hurt the same as if he were an adult, but he wouldn't remember it.

The doctor said, "In studies published in the past decade, the removal of the foreskin provided a 50% reduction in HIV transmission, a threefold reduction in human Papillomavirus (HPV) infections in female partners of circumcised men (HPV can cause cervical cancer), and lower rates of syphilis and Chlamydia, which causes sterility and is the main sexually transmitted disease among teenagers. Circumcised infants were also roughly 10 times less likely to suffer urinary tract infections and the high fevers associated with them. And circumcision virtually eliminates serious penile cancers, which invade about 1 in 100,000 uncircumcised men."

I noticed that Glenda was a true C cup now, but assumed that as soon as she stopped nursing, she'd most likely return to the B cup. It was a shock, having a wife and a son. I hoped there wouldn't be any reason why we couldn't have more. Maybe we'd get a girl to round out the set. George and Stephanie named their daughter Stefanie Glenda Jones. If they had a boy, I wondered if they'd name him George and insist that he learn to sing.

Our two primary concerns were producing food and maintaining security. If there was a third, it was maintaining our lifestyle by producing electrical power. At this point in time we had the generators and were only missing sufficient fuel. It would take a pair of those twin tank tankers to fill one tank and Frank's group only had a smaller 5,000-gallon tank. I had a word with Andy and he'd take my used generator if I could find tanks for him; and fuel, quite obviously.

The fuel part would be a whole lot easier than the tank part if I were any judge. Yes, I had the phone number for the tank manufacturer in Bakersfield. No, we didn't have a working phone and I really doubted they were building tanks these days. We discussed it and decided to get the tankers and jury rig something to supply the fuel until we could find a better solution. I-40 seemed like the ideal location to look first.

We took the tractor we knew would run and another we got to run and went looking. We found more just-in-time food delivery trucks than we did tankers, by a ratio of 3-4:1. The ones that stank when you got close were ignored. We had two trailers of food at the farm, a third at Andy's and a fourth at Franks. Frank got the first fuel trailer we found and Andy the second. We kept looking and found a tanker to refill our tanks. Then, God smiled at us one day and we found a fuel depot that had been served by a pipeline. It had a whole lot of stale gasoline and a slightly greater amount of stale diesel fuel. We started transferring fuel to empty tankers and hauling it back to our area. That's when George asked why we weren't looking for JP-8. The Army, he said, used JP-8 in everything from Hummers to aircraft. JP-8 was about the same thing as Jet fuel A. Thus, he



concluded, we were looking in the wrong places; we should be looking at airports with large storage tanks.

“Nashville is out.”

“That’s not the only airport in Tennessee.”

“Really? How many would you say there are?” I asked.

“Counting municipal airports over 80 and that doesn’t count military locations. I’m sure there are a few million gallons sitting around waiting for us to take them.” George replied.

“Well, since we probably can’t find any more underground tanks, we’ll have to find more tankers.”

“Those single units only hold around 9,000-gallons. What say we give those to Andy?”

“One of those would give him 40 days of run time at full power and I doubt he’ll be using full power. Frank will need at least two of those double units and he can send his own people out to get more fuel once we pin down a source.”

“How are you going to transfer the fuel to the tankers?”

“Large airports have fueling vehicles that pump it from the ground into the jets. We’ll use one of those unless you have a better idea.”

“That works for me.”

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“He’s a growing boy.”

“I think I must have counted his fingers and toes a hundred times. He’s a good looking boy with an even better looking mother.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere; in about 2 weeks.”

“You knew George and I aren’t pulling sentry duty anymore.”

“Not because you bothered to tell me; but yes, I know.”

“I’m sorry Glenda, sometimes it seems like there aren’t enough hours in the day or days in the week.”

“We need to start church back up, too. It will be hard to find a minister to baptize Paul if we don’t.”

“Ok, church on Sunday. Is my church ok or do you want to try and find one of your churches that are open?”

“I know some will disagree, but a church is a church, they’re all God’s house. As long as we attend one that believes in infant baptism, I’ll be happy.”

“Since both the Lutherans and the Methodists believe in it, we can go to your church or mine. I’ll check and see which churches are still operating.”

“I don’t want us to get into the habit of being Easter Christians.”

“Neither do I; do you want to go into town with me?”

“Sure, let me get the diaper bag and my Browning.”

That’s one hell of a combination, a diaper bag and a Browning; however the world had changed and not for the better. Never once in all of my imaginings had this one come up and I have a vivid imagination. I had never really believed I’d need those survey meters either and had bought them just in case. Had you asked me what I considered most likely; I would have included a tornado, an earthquake on the New Madrid Fault or even Yellowstone erupting before we’d have a nuclear war.

*Hope springs eternal* according to Alexander Pope. He was saying that people always hope for the best, even in the face of adversity. I wonder if the near end of civilization counts as adversity. If you looked at us for an example, we were more inconvenienced than anything. I wonder if the only people who will survive a calamity such as this are the preppers. My best guess is that two groups will survive the preppers and those damned fools who try to take away their preparations; which explains why we turned the farm into an armed camp. They might get our stuff, but they will pay dearly for it.

A prepper is someone who simply prepares for the worst and hopes for the best. Maybe they convert too much corn into ethanol or the wheat harvest isn’t what it should be, creating a shortage of corn products and flour. There are always alternatives, you can get starch from potatoes and use it to bake bread; have you ever heard of Spudnuts? Almost all of the remaining Spudnut shops are located in California. Wouldn’t it be awful if Coke had to use sugar again? Their market share would jump phenomenally.

We didn’t grow some of the staples we used here in Tennessee; rice was one example. Rice was grown in Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and California, before the war. The beans and rice crowd depended on the fact that rice and pinto beans served with cornbread or corn tortillas are often a staple meal where there is limited money for meat, but the combination of beans and corn creates all the protein amino acids needed for a meat substitute. Health magazine has selected lentils as one of the

five healthiest foods. Lentils are often mixed with grains, such as rice, which results in a complete protein dish. The point is that a person can store a lot of relatively cheap food and have a balanced, if boring, diet.

I assumed the closest place to find bulk rice would be Mississippi and if not there, Louisiana or Texas. We could grow our own beans and had been producing bumper crops. Glenda pointed out we were running low on coffee and that determined where I'd look for rice, New Orleans. It wasn't any trouble to find, I had a better map than FEMA. As you all probably know, Folgers coffee is roasted and packaged in New Orleans and Kansas City and a truckload should be enough, for a while.

Along the way, we'd look for fuel tankers, so George and I decided to take several people along to drive them back home. We made a big detour around Birmingham, it had clearly been nuked. We checked every tanker we came upon and those with diesel were sent home with only a driver. It was definitely risky, but they were well armed and I really doubted anyone would stand in the middle of the road and hold up his hand to try and get them to stop. The instructions were clear, don't stop for anything and if you need a bathroom break stop out in the middle of nowhere.

"What's in that one?"

"Gas."

"Forget it. We might pick it up on the way back."

Further down the road, another truck and it was 50-50. We sent that one home. We continued the process the full 600 miles to New Orleans and sent home nine trucks. We'd have a lifetime supply of gasoline and 55,000-gallons of additional diesel. We finally found Folgers by looking in the phone directory. There was a partially loaded truck and we finished loading it and then went looking for rice. A rice processing plant had rice with the husk, brown rice and white rice, with the latter two being packed in 50-pound bags. We settled for a mixed truckload of one-third brown and two-thirds polished rice.

We took a slight different way home in hopes of finding more tankers but only found a single 9,000-gallon trailer. The advantage of having the tankers was that as soon as one was emptied, we could haul it to an airport and refill it with Jet A which was a whole lot easier than trying to pump the fuel from service station tanks. If we pumped the airports dry, we could always resort to doing the latter.

"How was the trip?"

"Successful, one truckload of Folgers and one truckload of rice; plus, we sent 9 tankers of fuel back home. It was something else; they still haven't fixed up New Orleans from Katrina."

“We’re running out of room to park trucks.”

“Don’t I know it? I think we can park them across the road and let the sentries keep an eye on them. How is Paul today?”

“Cranky. I think he missed his daddy.”

Right, I picked him up to hold him and he promptly burped all over me with a little more than gas. Glenda took him and I went to change my shirt and then decided I needed a shower after the overnight stay in beautiful New Orleans. They don’t have a rat problem because there were a million or so cats running around. After the hurricane, a project to collect and neuter feral cats began. After treatment, the cats were released back on the city streets. If you think about that, the feral cat problem should resolve itself in about 10-15 years.

“Did you get him burped out?”

“Sorry about that, I thought he’d already burped.”

“Maybe he had, I’ve been known to burp more than once.”

“Tell about the trip.”

“There’s not much to tell Glenda. We kept a lookout for tanker trucks and took them if they had at least a half load of diesel. If they we all gasoline, we left them sit. When we got to New Orleans, we looked in the phone book and found Folgers. Their official location is 14601 Gentilly Road, but their depot is at 13801 Gentilly Road. After that we settled in for the night in Gentilly Village. The next day, we found a rice processing plant and we took a whole truckload. The load is one-third brown rice and two-thirds polished rice. That should last us for a while.”

“Fifty years?”

“That could be. Gentilly Village was what Procter and Gamble put in for the Folgers employees.”

“Then you came straight home?”

“Yes, by a different way looking for more tankers. We only found one more 9,000-gallon tanker. We could get a pump and empty out the diesel tanks in service stations, but George suggested we get the Jet A from airports. The Army uses JP-8 for everything and Jet A is about the same thing. JP-8 in addition contains icing inhibitor, corrosion inhibitors, lubricants, and antistatic agents. Outside of powering aircraft, JP-8 is used as a fuel for heaters, stoves, tanks, internal combustion engine powered electrical generators, as a replacement for diesel fuel, and other military vehicles, and serves as a coolant in engines and some other aircraft components.”

“I asked a simple question and I get a lecture.”

“Sorry. Do you want to know about JP-5?”

“No thank you.”

“Well, you know that chasing fuel for the generators will be an ongoing operation. A 16,000-gallon tanker will only last about 40 days. However, that depends a lot on how much of the rated power we use and if we only use 50%, that will reduce consumption to 240 gallons a day and extend the fuel to about 67 days.”

“You don’t have to go after it, do you?”

“I think it’s about time I stayed home for a while. He’s going to be all grown up and I won’t get to see it happen. We can probably trade off with Frank’s people and share the trip for fuel. It’s not that big of a deal, although I have no idea how much Jet A Chattanooga has.”

“Stephanie said something about anti-personnel mines. What did you do, line the whole road.”

“We didn’t get that many; to answer your question, we did line the road. Next time George goes to Chattanooga, I may have him pick up more. You know me, honey; I started out being against using mines and then realized that one Claymore was better than having several machineguns. We picked up some of those too. We gave Andy a fifty caliber and Frank’s people a fifty caliber and two thirty calibers. We kept one fifty and three thirties.”

“Do you have all of the boy toys you want, or should I expect an Abram tanks to show up next?”

“I think we have what we need so we can avoid the tank and learning how to use it. Have you tried the HK416 yet?”

“I like the rifle although it weighs nearly as much as the M1A. It’d much easier to carry those little 5.56 rounds.”

“Have you been keeping an eye on our level of supplies?”

“I added it to the inventory and deducted the stuff people took from the requisition list. I think we’ll probably have to do a periodic inventory, though. People are bound to forget to write down everything they take.”

“How did we do in terms of advance preparation?”

“I’d give us an A-. We were closer than I thought we would be.”

“We wouldn’t have been if there wasn’t money to spend to resolve our bloopers.”

“How did you do that? You only took a small draw and I know what something like the Tac-50 cost.”

“That special job account we set up buried most of the expense. You saw that after I calculated the profit every year I pulled out any money we didn’t need for operating expenses and planned purchases. By the same token, I’ll apply any income from farming operations to that account, more for appearances sake than anything else.”

“Can I change the subject?”

“What do you want to know?”

“How many kids are we planning on?”

“I suppose until you’re tired of having babies. There is going to be a lot more hand work than ever before.”

“Ok. Question two; have you considered alternative energy sources?”

“I considered it, but concluded it was impractical unless we can find a complete uninstalled wind turbine assembly and the associated equipment. The other alternative would be solar cells and I’m not sure where we’d find them. The Marine Corps has a huge solar field at 29 Palms near Palm Springs. I don’t think we should get that far away from home.”

“Why did you give our old generator to Andy?”

“His unit was a small propane fueled unit rated at 90 amps prime power. He needs what propane he has for the stove, furnace and hot water heater. George told me that when AmeriGas runs out of propane there won’t be any more. Conversely, if we have to, we can grow oil seed crops and produce our own biodiesel. You said something about getting a turnkey processor setup. I seem to recall that you were going to look for the information.”

“Have we refilled the coal room?”

“Damn.”

“I’ll take that as no. If you could track down Willy Nelson, he has a truck stop that sells biodiesel they produce onsite.”

“Willy? That gives me the urge for a drink (Whiskey River), can I fix you something?”

“Do you think I dare? It might get into my milk.”

“Would you rather have a Coke?”

“Please.”

I had a Coke too, right out of the can; however I poured some off and refilled the can with a dash of Jack. It was so much simpler when the whole world hated us. Andy stopped by to tell me the National Guard was in town.

“I think I’ll skip going to town for a while.”

“Didn’t you say you were scheduled to have the baby baptized?”

“That’s right it this coming Sunday at the Methodist Church.”

“They didn’t seem to hassling anyone. They cleaned out the stores and set the food up in the high school auditorium. They also brought supplies with them so anything the town was short on, they’re supplying. I expect that the only thing they have in common with FEMA is that both are government agencies. These are our people, not those damned Yankees.”

“We’re set on food, so I think we’ll pass. Do you have enough diesel fuel?”

“Spect so, why?”

“Let me know when you need more and we’ll pick some up. How are they doing over at Frank’s?”

“They’re settled in and I worked that deal with them to breed their gilts and gave them the extra milk cow and calf. I’m thinking about also giving them a yearling steer.”

“The calf is a heifer so they can begin building a herd, but I don’t know whether to haul the bull over there or the cow and heifer over to my place.” I suppose it’s six of one and a half dozen of the other.”

“We’ll need your bull soon, too.”

“Boar too?”

“That settles it, I’ll move them around.”

“Have you had a chance to try the weapons I gave you?”

“Why? The fifty cal is the same as I used in ‘Nam. I did take time to check the head spacing and timing. ‘Preciate the weapons, hope we don’t need them, though.”

“I agree. We may get and install more Claymores. I mentioned to Glenda that I’ve changed my mind and we should get more.”

“Damn right Paul. You can take out a whole squad with one weapon. Don’t know as I care for the shortened up M16. It seems like it has less power with that 14” barrel.”

“I think it reduces the velocity. As you know, I favor the M1A.”

“Why?”

“It’s a .30 caliber rifle that uses a gas piston and is far more reliable. That HK416/417, with the 20” sniper barrel, has a piston and a long enough barrel to provide adequate velocity. I have 4 of those, 2 of each; I got them for Glenda and. The M14 rifle, the basis for the M1A, had the shortest history of any US service rifle, except for the Johnson rifle which was only used by one unit, the Devil’s Brigade.”

“More than likely, I’ll just use my Garand. That’s a .30 caliber and Helen can use the little rifle.”

“Do you have ammo for the Garand?”

“I have some of that Greek surplus. It shoots ok.”

“How much do you have?”

“Two cases with 4 spam cans per case less the one I opened to shoot; probably around 1,500 rounds. It was late production, 1979, I think.”

“I see now why you don’t like the M4s. The .30-06 was a man’s rifle.”

“Still is.”

“You know Andy, I’ve been wondering what is going to happen next.”

“You mean besides outsiders attacking us?”

“Being attacked for our food is only one possibility. We could still have bad weather despite this extreme cold. It could be anything, you know.”

“What’s wrong Paul; you look worried.”



## Trapped – Chapter 11

“It shows? Well, I guess I am. If you sit back and look at what happened to our country, you’ll realize that it started to fall apart. The housing bubble burst, the dollar tanked and before we could recover, we went to war with China. If the economy was one and the war was two, what’s going to happen next?”

“Why do you expect something else to happen?”

“You know the guy who supplied that spreadsheet? He seemed to believe that bad things happen in threes. I don’t know whether to believe him or just dismiss him. Either way, if we plan for the worst and hope for the best, we’ll be better off.”

“I think you can write off a few of the possible disasters. With the cold weather, I doubt we’ll have tornados or hurricanes. If anything, it would be a snowstorm. This far south, I doubt we’d have a blizzard. You can forget a tsunami because we’re too far from any coast. On the other hand, there’s the New Madrid Fault, Yellowstone and Long Valley. As far as some kind of epidemic goes, we’re pretty isolated out here; does being attacked by jack booted thugs count?”

“Them and mutant zombie bikers, I suppose. If it’s just a skirmish, I wouldn’t set too much store in it. If it turns into a war, I might think otherwise.”

“We’re well prepared for an attack aren’t we?”

“We’ve got everything except that Abrams tank you were kidding me about.”

“Is there any danger of the kids getting into those mines?”

“We didn’t set them up with the tripwire and only use the M57 firing device. Only one wire is connected unless someone is in the fighting position. So, I doubt very much that there is any danger to the kids. Say, did you know that Andy has an old Garand rifle?”

“Helen never told me. I should have guessed, she talked about shooting the M4.”

“That wouldn’t have told you much, I gave him two.”

“You’ve turned into quite the survivalist.”

“I’m nothing like Kurt Saxon. I began to prepare a little when I saw the way things were going. We never once fired a weapon, except at the range. And, if we never do, that will be soon enough. I’ve prepared out of concern for myself first; and later for you too. I couldn’t leave my employees in a lurch and just pull the plug on them when it was obvious that TSHTF. I guess I’m better at organizing things than actually doing them. It worked out well that ten of my employees turned up and that Frank’s group turned out to be friendly.”

“So, other than going out for more fuel, we’re just going to hole up here?”

“That’s about the size of it. We’ll continue to increase our herds and flocks and when people come looking for food we should have some to sell. We might want to go up to the lake and seine some fish to round out our diet. I’m tired, are you ready for bed?”

“Be right with you.”

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I hadn’t spent much time on the ham radio because I’d been busy doing all the things I’ve mentioned. I decided I needed a break and after breakfast, sat down and started turning to the frequencies we listed since the war. Some were marked with an ‘N’ indicated we’d only heard or talked to them at night. I limited myself to those marked with the ‘D’. Some were on 80 meters and some on 75 meters, and even some on 40 meters. The lower the frequency, the higher the wavelength and consequently the range; two meters (VHF) was pretty much line of sight. A person had to deal with atmospheric effects like the 11-year solar cycle too. Radiation in the atmosphere had interfered until it had decayed enough.

My call sign is KN4OPY. I listened and tried to break in a few times, but they were engaged in conversations or didn’t hear me ask for a break. Instead, I listened. One fella with a 0 in his call sign was visiting with another with a 7 in his. The former was from the upper Midwest and the other from the west, but not California which is a 6. As near as I could discern, northwest was worried about a series of earthquakes they’d had. I finally determined that he was from Casper, Wyoming. The other fella mentioned Cedar Rapids, so he must be in Iowa. He said he hadn’t felt any earthquakes, but they rarely did.

I pulled out my Rand McNally and determined that Casper was at the junction of US 20 and I-25, north of Cheyenne. Casper was awful close to Yellowstone. The EAS hadn’t worked since the war, so if Yellowstone blew its cork, we might not know until the air turned black. I decided that we should monitor the frequency of the guy from Casper and mentioned it to Glenda. She said she’d get a teenager to do it. I told her I was going to visit with both Frank and Andy.

“Hi Frank.”

“Paul, something up?”

“I was listening on ham radio this morning and I heard a ham from Casper, Wyoming talking to another from Iowa. He said they’d had several earthquakes in their area.”

“Is that supposed to mean something?”

“Last night, Glenda and I were talking about what might happen next. One of the possibilities, however remote, is Yellowstone erupting. They say the chance of that happening any given day is about 1 in 20,000. I do know that the USGS has an observation location in Yellowstone and the data is monitored by the University of Utah in Salt Lake. Casper isn’t all that far from Yellowstone.”

“Isn’t that what that program *Supervolcano* was about?”

“If you saw it too, you must understand my concern.”

“Have you seen the ash fall maps?”

“No, why?”

“The largest was Lava Creek and it didn’t get to Tennessee.”

“But Lava Creek was about half the size of Huckleberry Ridge.”

“Huckleberry Ridge didn’t come that far.”

“But the TV show said...”

“You know how Hollywood exaggerates everything.”

“If you say so. I just wanted to let you know.”

What I could have said, but didn’t was that Hollywood had nothing to do with *Supervolcano*. It was produced by BBC. The film ends with three quarters of the United States covered in nearly one centimeter of volcanic ash on average as a looming cloud of suspended, lighter ash gets carried over the globe, engulfing the northern hemisphere of Earth, and as a result, plunging it into a volcanic winter. The southern hemisphere however, gets a dose of the ice age while the rest of it is in drought. The only difference between the nuclear winter we were just coming out of and a volcanic winter was the cause. FEMA was in the movie in their usual incompetent role.

“Andy, got a minute?”

“For you Paul, sure.”

“Did you see that Discovery Channel movie *Supervolcano*?”

“I did, wasn’t that something?”

“Do you recall the likelihood of another *Supervolcano*?”

“Didn’t Tom Brokaw say one in twenty thousand?”

“Someone said, but I’m not sure who. The thing is, I was on ham radio this morning and picked up a conversation between a ham in Casper and another in Cedar Rapids. The guy in Casper said they’d had a bunch of earthquakes.”

“The show said they were caused by the movement of magma.”

“I know. Glenda and I were talking last night about possible disasters and the subject of Yellowstone came up.”

“Well... unless someone decides to start WW IV, we could have a quake like 1812, Yellowstone or possibly a meteor smashing into the planet. I think all this cold we’re having is that nuclear winter that Carl Sagan talked about.”

“Imagine if it were followed by a volcanic winter.”

“Really? Oh, crap.”

“It’s not for sure of course, I only heard the one conversation; but we will be monitoring the radio for a while.”

“We might have to lay in more firewood and diesel.”

“Can you burn coal?”

“Sure thing; got a coal room in the basement.”

“I bring you some coal and we’ll try to find more tankers.”

o

It was time to get my hands dirty and with George’s help, we hauled three loads of coal to each of the three farms because they could heat with coal or wood. The woodstoves need wood, not coal and a month of harvesting wood produced heaping piles for the wood stoves and fireplace. The kid that monitored the radio kept us up to date and those earthquakes were an on-again, off-again affair. It didn’t matter one iota, come what may, we were prepared.

Getting back to making preparations, instead of enjoying the preparations we had, was a lot of fun. We searched far and wide for fuel transports and hauled multiple loads of Jet A from Chattanooga to the farms. A crop of hay was stacked against the trailers to provide additional insulation, just in case. Propane was found and relocated with additional tanks being installed. To protect them against stray bullets, berms were constructed. As the garden crops came in they were canned or stored in the cold cellar. With the gradual lessening of the nuclear winter our output greatly increased, allowing us to store produce and seed.

Finally, the guy with 7 call sign accepted the offer from the guy with the 0 call sign to relocate. Eastern Iowa had little, if any, ash from the three previous eruptions. You just knew that one day Yellowstone would erupt again and it was overdue. It was less of a surprise than WW III.

“Frank, that guy in Casper is relocating to Cedar Rapids.”

“That’s good; he’ll be out of the ash fall. For that matter so will we.”

“Aren’t you making an assumption?”

“I suppose I’m assuming that it won’t be any worse than it has been over the last two million years.”

“And, what if it is?”

“Then it is. We’re doing all the prep stuff you’ve recommended. Plus we’re almost out of space to store diesel. We covered those two truckloads of coal with a tarp to keep it out of the weather. What else should we do?”

“Are you still practicing with the firearms?”

“We’ve been pretty busy farming. We’re all city folk and this isn’t a natural activity for us.”

“You don’t farm 7 days a week. On your off days, you should get in some range time. It’s not like there’s any shortage of ammo.”

“We’ve been here what, two years? Not once, in all that time, were we threatened. I don’t see the need.”

“You never know if someone followed us when we were picking up coal or diesel. We made nine trips for coal and over a dozen for diesel.”

“Not to change the subject, but why haven’t we gone green?”

“You show me where we can find a complete wind turbine package with all the equipment and we’ll install it in a heartbeat. If it’s a big one, say 1 megawatt, it would supply all three farms. If you know where we can get enough solar panels to cover the houses, barns and out buildings and we could go solar. Keep in mind that if we have a volcanic winter, the amount of sunlight will fall drastically.”

“The TVA put in a lot of wind turbines in the Oak Ridge area. They’re generating almost 30 megawatts at the Buffalo Mountain Wind Farm.”

“We don’t get enough wind in this area to make a wind farm efficient. At best, wind turbines generate electricity 50% of the time and need a minimum of 14mph. I don’t want to rain on your parade Frank, but I have considered both solar and wind.”

Were you to look at a Tennessee wind map, you’d see that central Tennessee where we were didn’t get enough wind. No doubt we could scrounge solar panels, a time consuming endeavor that might prove to be fruitless if Yellowstone did, in fact, blow its top. When I shared that with Glenda, she accused me of short thinking. “Think long term,” she said.

I suppose we could always go to Nashville and take the panels off of Al Gore’s home, they’re nearly new. Wait, they nuked Nashville and the panels were probably destroyed, along with Al Gore. Well, a person is entitled to hope, no? He probably wasn’t home; instead off reinventing the internet or some such fool thing. They were in the process of doing that very thing, you know, but it started in Europe and they called it the Grid.

Poor Al had a problem when he tried to install solar panels; it violated the CCRs or something. He finally did it, much too late. Knoxville bragged about all the solar panels they had and we decided to make a trip east. We wouldn’t confront anyone, but if a place were abandoned...

The real problem with solar was storing the energy for when you needed it. You turn the lights on at night, after the sun goes down and the panels aren’t producing power. The answer was batteries and inverters. I learned you could use power panels and multiple inverters to produce enough power. Remember, that big generator we had could produce round 200kw, at full load. I did note that it rarely ran at full load and generally only when we were running air conditioning did it get close. At those times, we probably used 120kw. Our average fuel usage supported that, it was around 10gph.

Andy worked his farm alone. Most times when we offered to help, he’d say we’d just get in the way. This year, his garden was far larger than normal and Helen couldn’t handle it. Glenda and Stephanie offered to lend a hand. They were running two canners because they couldn’t prepare the food for canning as fast as they could pressure cook it.

Knoxville was inhabited and we decided we wouldn’t confront the residents. If we sat back and waited, maybe the final disaster would affect them and make the solar panels available. We had an idea of how many were available, more than we needed, but they weren’t worth the heartache.

Not long after, something happened and my immediate thoughts were that Yellowstone had erupted. I mean, we got the dust clouds and they were leaving a lot of dust on the ground. It was far more than 1 cm. One inch equals 2.54cm and we had at least 2”. It was like that Johnny Cash song, *Five feet and rising*. The generator cut out because the air filter got clogged and I had to go out and clean it using a flashlight.

“What happened to the power?”

“The generator got clogged.”

“Say, you don’t suppose that has anything to do with meteor impact last night, do you?”

“What meteor impact?”

“It happened around midnight. The sentries reported sighting a large meteor to the west that apparently impacted.”

With George’s help, I fashioned a first stage filter at the blast valve to keep the dust out of the generator’s air cleaner. I should mention that the MSRP on the two generators we got was just under \$100k, each. That’s for those folks who would keep track of our excesses (looting).

I’d read most of TOM’s fiction and my mind immediately flashed on Clarence. At the moment, however, I was still thinking it had to be Yellowstone. For one thing, the debris from an impact only spreads out a few radii from the crater. Yes, they identified iridium which led to the theory that an impact wiped out the dinosaurs (Chicxulub). However, unless I’d read it wrong, the iridium layer was not very thick, despite covering the world. Speaking of TOM, Yellowstone was high on his list.

If it was Yellowstone; and if, the eruption was the largest yet, that might explain two inches of ash and growing. We wouldn’t know until I could pick up some information from the ham bands. If the ash didn’t get too deep; we could plow it into the soil for enrichment. The question remained, “Which was it, a meteor or Yellowstone?” Did it really matter which it was, the dinosaurs have been dead for 65 million years, except at Jurassic Park, and that was only a book and movie.

The dust in the air was charged with static electricity nearly eliminating communications. The best we could do was keeping the farms in touch with each other, via CB. I explained to Frank what we’d done to filter out some of the ash from the generator. He said they’d come up with something because they’d had the same problem. Andy, being older than either of us, laughed and said he’d done it the minute the ash began falling.

For the moment, I wasn’t worried about human predators. Have you seen the videos of Spokane and Yakima, Washington after Mt. St. Helens erupted? The dust was so thick you could barely see. One account of the aftermath said:

*The ash fall created some temporary but major problems with transportation, sewage disposal, and water treatment systems. Visibility was greatly decreased during the ash fall, closing many highways and roads. Interstate 90 from Seattle to Spokane was closed for a week and a half. Air travel was disrupted for a few days to 2 weeks as several airports in eastern Washington shut down because of ash accumulation and poor visibility. Over a thousand commercial flights were canceled following airport closures. Fine-grained, gritty ash caused substantial problems for internal-combustion engine and*

*other mechanical and electrical equipment. The ash contaminated oil systems and clogged air filters, and scratched moving surfaces. Fine ash caused short circuits in electrical transformers, which in turn caused power blackouts.*

*Removing and disposing of the ash was a monumental task for some eastern Washington communities. State and federal agencies estimated that over 2.4 million cubic yards (1.8 million m<sup>3</sup>) of ash – equivalent to about 900,000 tons in weight – were removed from highways and airports in Washington. Ash removal cost \$2.2 million and took 10 weeks in Yakima. The need to remove ash quickly from transport routes and civil works dictated the selection of some disposal sites. Some cities used old quarries and existing sanitary landfills; others created dumpsites wherever expedient. To minimize wind reworking the ash dumps, the surfaces of some disposal sites were covered with topsoil and seeded with grass. In Portland, the mayor eventually threatened businesses with fines if they failed to remove the ash from their parking lots.*

That was about 30 years ago during May of 1980, I don't remember the day. In *Supervolcano*, they said that if Yellowstone were to erupt, it could be 6 to 10,000 times worse. Have you ever seen Jacob Lowenstern? He looks like an 18 year old kid (still does).

When Supervolcanoes erupt they can cover entire continents with ash. But how this happens has been a puzzle because wind and the initial force of the eruption are not enough to carry the ash over such long distances. Now an examination of prehistoric eruptions has come up with an answer.

Supervolcanoes are classified as volcanoes that spew out more than a trillion tons of material when they erupt – equivalent to 30 Krakatoa's. Such volcanoes cannot be studied directly as the most recent was Toba in Sumatra around 71,000 years ago. So Peter Baines from the University of Melbourne, Australia, and Stephen Sparks from the University of Bristol, UK, used geological records of ash volume and magma chamber size to estimate the energy of past blasts and model the plumes they would have generated. From this they deduced that the Earth's rotation fans ash out into a giant spinning cloud up to 6000 kilometers wide within one day. "It is a bit like a hurricane, but on a much larger scale," Sparks says.

Unfortunately the findings don't offer a solution for surviving a future eruption, such as if the Supervolcano underneath Yellowstone National Park in the US were to blow. "I'm not sure what we could do, except stay underground," says Sparks. From issue 2534 of *New Scientist* magazine, 14 January 2006, page 19.

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I like to find the good in everyone and everything. I guess the good thing was that the ash was only slightly radioactive. Not enough that we'd have to try and crowd 12 families totaling over 40 people in a 400ft<sup>2</sup> shelter. We didn't still have 44 people; we were up to 48 and growing, a certain lady of my intimate acquaintance told me she was pregnant again.



The ash thickened, held for over two weeks and then began to thin. By the time it was settled out and the air nearly clear, a month had passed. We actually didn't get that much, two inches. Our first task was to clean it off the roofs before we got moisture that would turn it into concrete. Around the buildings, we bladed it off as best as we could and plowed all the farmland, disked it, dragged it and seeded the portion for pasture with a mix of rye and clover. We could only hope that there would be enough warmth for the seed to germinate. The farming part of our labor was over for the year and we just tended the livestock.

Andy sold a load of beef and two loads of hogs to the guy over in Monterey, for gold of course. He said he had all the hay and grain we would need and all we had to do was ask. Our fillies, now mares, had foaled and the additional horses we bought were close to foaling. We'd have 20 horses total when they did. In a few more years, we'd have horses for everyone to ride, but would need saddles and bridles. I don't know why I brought up the horses; it will be a long while before we have enough for everyone.

"Paul, did you hear about the meteor?"

"Yes Tom, George told me."

"You figure this dust is from that?"

"I was leaning more to Yellowstone."

"Can I ask you a hypothetical question?"

"I may not have the answer but go ahead."

"What would happen if Yellowstone was getting ready to blow and it got hit by a meteor?"

"Do you have any idea of the odds of that happening? If I calculate it right it would be about 20000<sup>2</sup> or one chance in 400 million."

"Where did you get those numbers?"

"From TV, didn't you watch History channel? The odds of either one is about 1:20000 and the odds of both would be one in 20000 times 20000."

"You didn't have much of a life before you got married, huh?"

"Sure I did. I worked 12 hours a day and watched the History channel over a TV dinner. The only difference between that and being married to Cheryl was I only worked 10 hours per day."

“What do you think of my idea?”

“You mean the meteor hitting Yellowstone?”

“Yeah.”

“How do you measure for iridium?”

“I have no idea, don’t you?”

“The only metals I’m into are gold and silver. Iridium is the same group of metals as platinum, but I didn’t buy any platinum because it’s worth more than the price of gold. I think they found it in a thin layer of iridium rich clay. It is also found in alluvial deposits because it’s heavy.”

“Can’t you talk to someone on the radio?”

“Anyone close enough to know is most likely dead. I could try to reach that guy from Wyoming who went to Cedar Rapids. If he were in Cedar Rapids instead of in Casper, how would he know?”

“Why did we plow the ash under?”

“We plowed it to spread it out. We’ll have to plow again come spring, if spring comes. Otherwise, we stuck with getting livestock feed from Andy and growing food in the greenhouse. We actually have more food now than we had before you came. Back then, we were working off an 8 year supply for 1; which, before the war, ended up being a 2 year supply for 4.”

Tom’s questions were irritating. How did he expect me to know the answers to the things he asked? I wasn’t Superman, I was a general contractor who had a little money and got into prepping. If anyone was the expert, it was Glenda, not me. Even she admitted to error with regard to the greenhouse. The roof of the greenhouse had Lexan panels and it had Plexiglas side walls. We installed homemade grow lights although warm white bulbs were hard to find.

As to Tom’s question about a meteor striking Yellowstone, I wanted to believe it. I sort of believed what’s-his-name’s belief in the rule of threes and according to his stories, if you went over three, the next stop was nine. We had the economic meltdown and WW III. If a meteor hit Yellowstone, it would represent one large disaster and bring us to three. Although it was beyond our control, stopping here we hopefully end the disasters and we could get on with our lives, after it warmed up.

## Trapped – Epilogue

It did warm up; maybe say 1° a year on average. We figured it would take a full ten years to get back to our normal average temperatures. Meanwhile we maintained our breeding program and traded livestock to the guy in Monterey for feed. Frank's clan provided free butchering, cutting wrapping and curing of the meat we grew for our own use.

Eventually, the motorhomes and travel trailers were replaced by large singlewide mobile homes. When the coal was exhausted we had to go to wood only for heat. We continued to go to Chattanooga for fuel until we couldn't get more. Obviously, someone else was getting fuel there, too. We tried Nashville next because the radioactivity was all but gone and it had a huge airport.

When we ran out of PRI-D, we made a trip down to Houston and loaded up on more PRI products. All we could find were 5-gallon pails, but they were good enough and we brought back a truckload. Glenda had been right, when I started down the slippery slope by taking those radios from Radio Shack, it did turn into a peanuts eating affair.

With four children, 3 boys and 1 girl, we stopped having children. George and Stephanie didn't and they ended up with 7. This old house wasn't large enough for that big of a crowd and we pulled a demonstrator triple wide to the farm and erected it for them. I don't think we still needed a chaperone.

We were attacked from time to time by people who were looking for food or whatever. We never had anyone killed although some were seriously wounded. The doctor in town was able to patch them up and we provided him with meat and home canned food in exchange. As far as defense went, our single greatest asset proved to be the Claymore mines. They were set just far enough back from the road to produce maximum effect and Frank always let us know when an attack was coming.

Frank's group lost two people to attacks, proving that Andy had made a good suggestion putting them on the first farm on the road. Andy and Helen more or less retired, dividing their livestock between our farm and Franks. He said we could farm his land if we wanted to, he didn't care one way or the other. The only thing he asked for in return was two of the TWH fillies. He never told me how old Helen and he were, but I figured they were older than dirt.

It was a far different society that arose after the three disasters. For one thing, nearly everyone was armed, usually with a handgun and a long arm. People gradually returned to their homes and businesses. One Texas refinery finally reopened after several years of repairs and a Gulf oil platform began pumping crude. The demand wasn't what one might expect; many motor vehicles no longer ran. Anywhere that motor vehicles didn't rust out did a land office business in 40 and 50 year old vehicles. It didn't take much to repair them, because many had manual transmissions and old V-8 engines.

We got law enforcement back too. Thing was, many states exercised their rights under the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment and if the Constitution didn't clearly prohibit something, it became legal, more often than not. The states couldn't do anything about the interstate commerce clause. Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, known as the Commerce Clause, states that Congress has the exclusive authority to manage commerce between the states, with foreign nations, and Indian tribes; specifically, "To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes".

You didn't see so many lawsuits these days, lawyers were expensive and bullets were not. The media was awful careful what they said or put in print, libel suits came in several calibers. Not every law enforcement agency had a fancy forensic lab either. I suppose that if I had to pick a time from our past that represented current society, it would be a combination of two times, before the advent of motor vehicles and perhaps the 1950s. The '50s were a real growth period for the country after the Korean War ended.

That's what happened to us and our friends. It was only special because I had the money to make the necessary preparations. In the early days, we did a few things I'm not proud of although the situation called for those actions. Just remember:

*The sun'll come out  
Tomorrow  
Bet your bottom dollar  
That tomorrow  
There'll be sun!*

*Just thinkin' about  
Tomorrow  
Clears away the cobwebs,  
And the sorrow  
'Til there's none!*

*When I'm stuck a day  
That's gray,  
And lonely,  
I just stick out my chin  
And Grin,  
And Say,  
Oh!*

*The sun'll come out  
Tomorrow  
So ya gotta hang on  
'Til tomorrow  
Come what may  
Tomorrow! Tomorrow!*

*I love ya Tomorrow!*  
*You're always*  
*A day*  
*A way!*

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